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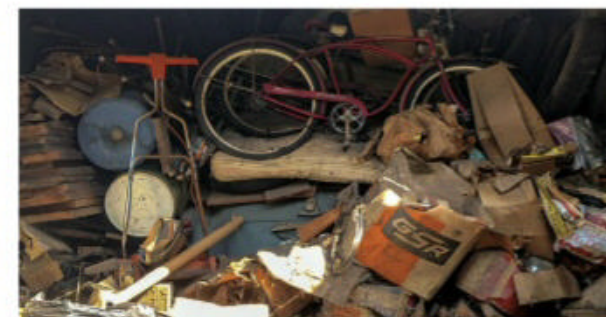
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I guess as  
time marches  
on our tastes  
change,  
preferences  
are rewritten,  
and our vision  
of what's  
attractive or  
what isn't is  
transformed.

//

## Desired Undesirables

**I**sn't it amazing that when we look back on certain cars from the 1980s and '90s, models that we never would have ever considered collecting or even owning, seemingly overnight, are now automobiles that we suddenly desire and would love to have parked in our garage. When did this happen, and how?

I guess as time marches on our tastes change, preferences are rewritten, and our vision of what's attractive or what isn't is transformed. The "adjustments" that our mind makes are quite revealing, and usually have a positive and rewarding effect on our life, especially when it comes to the cars that make us happy.

Just a few short years ago, I never would have ever given a second thought to owning a big Cadillac Sedan de Ville from the '70s, but now I want one. I can now see my friends and I cruising down Interstate 78 on our way to Hershey in total comfort, with plenty of room to stretch out and having a trunk large enough to bring home more useless stuff that we don't need, but must have.

In retrospect, here are the cars that I once disliked, but now have a newfound appreciation for and think about adding to my overstuffed New England garage.

**BUICK GRAND NATIONAL:** Although I always appreciated the GN and what it stood for, I never wanted one. I used to commute in a turbocharged Regal owned by a coworker, which is essentially similar, and always enjoyed its smooth ride and swift, yet quiet, acceleration. Now that I have gotten older and appreciate having a car with larger doors, more elbow room, and cushiony seats, I want one. And they look so badass, too. Add to this category a Monte Carlo SS of the same era—in dark blue metallic, please.

**BUICK REATTA:** Two-seaters are fun to drive yet this often overlooked stylish "sports car" has lots going for it, such as Buick's well-engineered 3.8-liter V-6, a distinctive design and limited production. The days of looking at a Reatta as an old-man's car are now over. And they are priced right, too!

**CADILLAC ELDORADO TOURING COUPE:** Besides having a mega-size Sedan de Ville parked alongside it, for those long journeys through winding mountainous roads a taut-handling Eldorado Touring Coupe will make for a truly enjoyable drive. I always thought they were a bit too big, but now their size is simply perfect. And those seats...oh my!

**CHEVROLET CITATION X-11:** It may be just a lowly X-body, but I'm now more attracted to the Citation's well-proportioned, matchless '80s style than ever before, perhaps because today's cars all look like faceless jellybeans. Its plainness is alluring in an odd kind of way. A black-and-gold X-11 with matching gold wheels would be soooo cool. As the always entertaining Charles Phoenix says, "I know, I know."

**DODGE CARAVAN:** Yes, I said a Dodge Caravan. There's something special about the earliest models of this historically significant "automobile," and I just love that early soccer-mom style! There's plenty of room for my three Dachshunds to jump around in, and mechanical parts are durable and cheap. But it must have the fake woodgrain exterior—now that's cool!

**MAZDA RX-7:** When it first blasted onto the scene back in 1978, its unusual shape took a lot of warming up to in order to appreciate that it was more of a leader than a follower. I get it now. And I always liked the high-revving action of a rotary engine. Trouble is that they're hard to find in a condition that won't require a ground-up restoration.

**OLDSMOBILE TROFEO:** I never cared for its side profile, because the rear side window is way bigger than it should be, but now this dolled-up Toronado appeals to me in ways I never thought it ever would. Its horizontally finned front end is very attractive, and those '80s-era BBS-style wheels are so retro!

**VOLKSWAGEN GTI:** A first-generation GTI, one of those cars that if you ever get the chance to drive one you won't want to give it back. It's a blast, will plaster a smile on your face from ear to ear, and is loaded with a unique character all its own. In the late '80s, I had a Ford Escort SS that I greatly enjoyed, but the GTI is on a whole other level. I never cared for its boxy shape, but now I find it immensely attractive.

I know you feel the same way as I do, so please take the time to tell us which once-undesirable cars you'd like to own now that years ago you had no interest in. 🐞

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## Corvette Museum Growing

**STAFF AT THE NATIONAL CORVETTE MUSEUM ANNOUNCED THE PURCHASE OF AN** 8,000-square-foot building, next to the museum located at 150 Corvette Drive, for \$1.3 million. This addition will provide urgently needed storage space for the facility and will accommodate more donated cars and memorabilia. The museum's growing collections will include more cars, racing suits, parts, and other artifacts. The NCM is also planning to provide a studio for photographing cars and conducting video interviews. The museum is located in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and is open seven days a week. For more information, visit [www.corvettemuseum.org](http://www.corvettemuseum.org).

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## Las Vegas Concours d'Elegance

**LAS VEGAS WILL HOST A WEEKEND OF EVENTS CENTERED AROUND ITS INAUGURAL** Concours d'Elegance. The festivities will take place October 25-28 with the Concours on Saturday at the Dragon Ridge Country Club. The Concours will feature more than 25 classes, including a special marque celebrating "Designer Dream Cars of the 1930s." Up to 150 select vehicles are expected. Sunday will feature a Tour d'Elegance, exclusive to the show's vehicles, to parade down the Las Vegas Strip. For lodging and ticketing information, please visit the event website at [www.lasvegasconcours.com](http://www.lasvegasconcours.com).







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## Light My Way

**OUTSIDE OF AMERICA, HEARSES TEND TO SHOW A LITTLE MORE FLAIR AS THEY FERRY** the dead to their final resting places. Take, for instance, this 1959 Cadillac brought out of storage in Greece, sometime in 2017, that we came across on the King Daddy Caddy forums thanks to Bernardo Corman.

Ornate doesn't begin to describe the hearse. Glass encases the entire rear section and etchings decorate nearly every panel, with carvings filling what little space remains in between the panels. And, as if all that glass didn't permit a good view of the casket within, several lamps provide adequate illumination.

The original poster didn't have any more information on the Cadillac, and we've seen no other updates on the Cadillac, so if anybody out there can tell us more about who built the hearse and where it is now, get in touch!

## Roughing It

**THE GMC MOTORHOME OF THE 1970S** was an awesome self-enclosed house on wheels that still has a cult following, but it wasn't the first motorhome that GM built, as we see from this image that GM's own PhotoStore recently released.

Described as a 1932 Buick transformed into a motorhome in conjunction with Harley Earl's Art & Colour Section, it appears to have used a 1931 hood and 1933 wheels along with a commercial chassis.

Whether it was built in-house or by a coachbuilding firm, we don't know, nor do we know if glamping was really in the cards for this concept: Other Buick commercial chassis went on to serve as limousines, buses, and transportation for resorts, and it's difficult to peer inside this vehicle to see how it was outfitted.

Still, if this rig is still out there, we wouldn't mind taking it on a little road trip.



## First Brubaker

**FINALLY, AFTER PROFILING THE EFFORT TO BRING** the Brubaker Box back to market for the *Hemmings Daily*, we got some exciting news from Dale Davis and Tomo Bullum, the entrepreneurs behind the project: The first-built Brubaker Box has been found and authenticated by Curtis Brubaker himself.

As Bullum related the story, Brubaker ended up selling the first Brubaker Box (one of three he built prior to one of his investors taking up the mantle and cranking out another couple dozen or so) after the venture ended in the early Seventies. The fiberglass-bodied Volkswagen-based sport van ended up in Florida, where it first sat in a contractor's lot for a couple decades, then in a literal swamp for 15 years.

Davis and Bullum pulled the Box from the swamp earlier this year and started piecing together their plan to offer the Box once again in both kit and built-up form. As for the swampy Box, it's seen better days, but remains intact and restorable.



✿ Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions, and answers should be submitted to *Lost & Found*, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201, or emailed to [dstrohl@hemmings.com](mailto:dstrohl@hemmings.com). For more *Lost & Found*, visit [blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found](http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found).



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MECUM AUCTIONS



## Mile-High Mecum

**MECUM'S JULY AUCTION IN DENVER SAW A LITTLE OVER A 60-PERCENT SELL-THROUGH RATE** with total sales surpassing \$10 million. There were 358 cars that changed hands and one of them was this 1930 Packard Dual Cowl Phaeton. The eight-cylinder Packard featured front and rear folding windscreens, tan convertible top, dual pilot ray headlamps, and dual side-mounted spare tires. When the bidding concluded, the Packard sold for \$63,250. Also selling were a pair of Plymouths: one a Deluxe selling for \$4,400 and the other a Super Deluxe sedan for \$6,050. Full results are now available at [www.mecum.com](http://www.mecum.com), and be sure to look for the auction house at its next show in Kansas City, December 5-7.

## Leake's Tulsa Results

**LEAKE AUCTION COMPANY CONCLUDED** its June sale in Oklahoma with more than 500 vehicles on offer. Final sales eclipsed \$7 million with a sell-through rate just shy of 70 percent. Among some of the prewar American offerings were this 1929 Dodge Brothers DA Six that sold for \$16,000. A nicely functioning 1938 Cadillac Series 60 also sold for \$7,500. Some of the postwar highlights included a 1948 Packard woodie wagon that sold for \$21,000 and a 1951 Willys woodie Jeepster changing hands at \$19,000. Full results from the June show are available at [www.leakecar.com](http://www.leakecar.com). Leake's next auction will take place October 31-November 2 in Arlington, Texas.



LEAKE AUCTION

## AUCTION PROFILE

<b>CAR</b>	1939 Mercury convertible
<b>AUCTIONEER</b>	Mecum Auctions
<b>LOCATION</b>	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
<b>DATE</b>	August 2, 2019
<b>LOT NUMBER</b>	F191
<b>RESERVE</b>	None
<b>AVERAGE SELLING PRICE</b>	\$33,000
<b>SELLING PRICE</b>	\$32,450

**IN ITS FIRST YEAR, MERCURY WAS BILLED AS** "the car that dares to ask the question 'Why?'" The big and economical car was marketed to bridge the gap between the Fords and Lincolns with a base price about \$200 above Ford and, in the case of the convertible, \$700 less than Lincoln. The first engines were all 95-hp flathead V-8s, and more than 70,000 Mercurys were sold its inaugural year, with 7,818 being convertibles.

This Mercury has undergone a cosmetic restoration and is finished in Dove Gray with Burgundy leather



MECUM AUCTIONS

interior and black soft-top. It features the desirable two-speed Columbia rear axle and artillery wheels with trim rings and Mercury hubcaps. The large two-spoke steering wheel is complimented by a bronze painted dash. Overall, we'd say this convertible is a fine example of the rare prewar Mercurys and it rightly sold at market value.





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22-24 • McCormick  
Palm Springs, California  
760-320-3290  
www.classic-carauction.com



RM SOTHEBY'S

## Auburn Highlights

**RM SOTHEBY'S ANNUAL SPRING AUCTION** saw a four-day total in sales that reached more than \$6.8 million this past June. The sell-through rate came in at 65.8 percent of the vehicles changing hands. Among those that sold, the pictured 1932 Pierce-Arrow Model 35 sedan had a straight-eight engine, three-speed manual transmission, and dual side-mounted spares with sideview mirrors. The Arrow hammered home at \$30,800. Other prewar lots that stood out were a well-restored 1931 Chevrolet Independence, that was selling for \$14,850, as well as a "shovelnose" 1932 Packard 900 that had many factory options including wire wheels and period-correct whitewall tires. The Packard sold for a healthy \$94,600. All results and pictures are available at [www.rmsothebys.com](http://www.rmsothebys.com).



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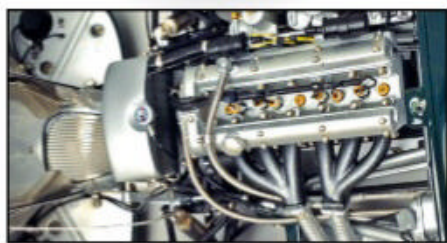
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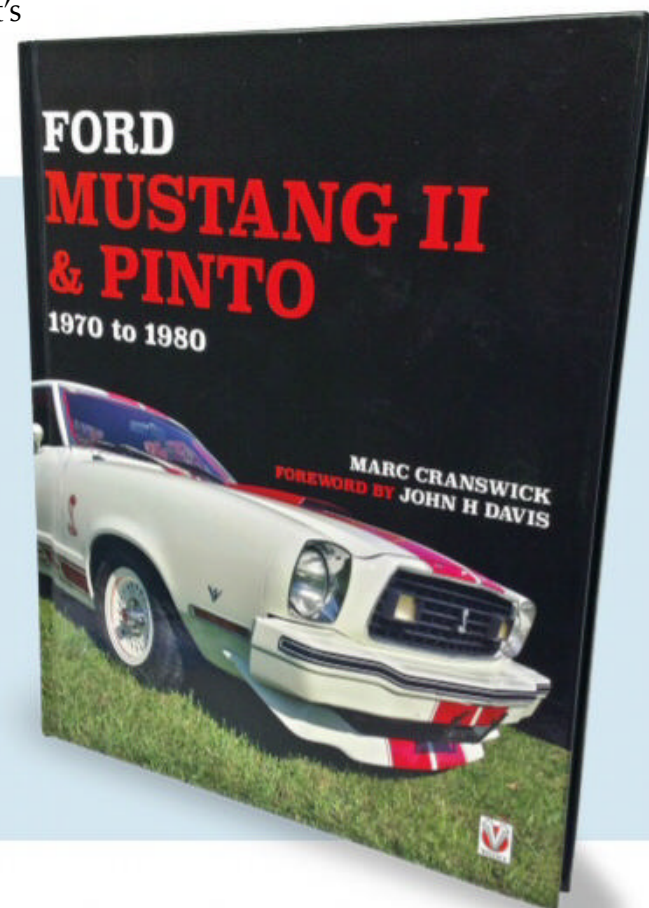
WWW.CMCMODELCARSUSA.COM • \$525

When Jaguar Cars chose to compete at 1951's 24 Hours of Le Mans, its engineers developed the peerlessly beautiful XK 120 C, popularly known as the C-type. The artisans at Classic Model Cars have modeled a 1952 C-type, chassis XKC 023, in 1:18-scale, and it truly is a work of art. The voluptuous shape of our sample wore a flawless coat of British Racing Green, while the buckets were upholstered in genuine saddle leather. Underneath a magnet-fastened cloth tonneau were aluminum floors straddling a flock-carpeted tunnel, and the single door for the driver opened on tiny hinges. That wasn't the only opening panel: the fuel filler lifted, the tail piece unscrewed to release the intricate spare wire wheel mounting a Dunlop racing tire—you can actually swap wheels using the eared knock-off hubs!—and after undoing buckles holding tiny leather straps, the accurately louvered, ducted, front-hinged bonnet tilted to reveal the front suspension and the most detailed scale DOHC XK six-cylinder we've ever seen. This collectible is undoubtedly a serious investment, but it's guaranteed to be the pride of any collection.

## Pony and Pinto Primer

VELOCE PUBLISHING • 800-458-0454 • WWW.QUARTOKNOWS.COM • \$35.95

While some deride Ford's Pinto, along with the Mustang II based upon it, the naysayers forget how widely accepted these cars were in their day, and their lasting impact on the hot rod and performance car landscape. The subcompact, simple Pinto was very well timed to offer economical motoring during the 1970s gas crisis, while the Mustang II reached back to that nameplate's roots, reinterpreting the original Mustang in a contemporary package that swapped raw performance for sporty style and personal luxury. *Ford Mustang II & Pinto 1970 to 1980* (ISBN 9781787112674) is an important, focused title by noted auto writer Marc Cranswick that delves into the history behind, the lifespans of, and the legacies left by this Blue Oval duo. The 128-page hardcover takes readers through the Seventies, tracing the evolution of the Pinto and Mustang II, and highlights their special editions and popular culture tie-ins. Special attention is given to the Pinto's racing career, as well as its controversial safety history. If you have any connection to these important best sellers, you'll want this book for your library.



## Mopar Neon

GARAGE ART • 800-708-5051 • WWW.GARAGEART.COM • \$319.95

The Chrysler Motor Parts Corporation, established in 1929, would evolve into a world-famous parts subsidiary brand in 1937, when its sole product was antifreeze. Mopar grew rapidly over the next decade, and as its offerings expanded, so did its influence. The first proper Mopar logo, used between 1937 and 1947, read "Use Chrysler Engineered MoPar Trademark Parts and Accessories for Plymouth-Dodge-DeSoto-Chrysler." It's this stylish seal that has been replicated as an era-perfect Mopar Dealer Neon Sign (item GAD-NEO-5MPRVS). Generously sized at 32 x 17 x 4 inches, it features screen-printed graphics enhanced with three colors of genuine hand-bent glass tube neon, and runs on household current via a 6-foot cord. This sign is made to order, and ships in 14 to 21 business days; it's sure to please Mopar aficionados.







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To help convert the Romans, Constantine associated Sol Invictus with Christ:

- ☀ On December 25th, the Romans honored Sol with a winter solstice feast. Under Constantine, this became a celebration of Christ (Christmas).
- ☀ In A.D. 321, Constantine declared "Sun Day" as a day to rest and worship Sol Invictus. Upon converting, Constantine kept Sunday as the new Christian day of rest (instead of Saturday).
- ☀ Constantine merged the celebration of Christ's resurrection with that of the vernal equinox, moving Easter to the Sunday after the first full moon of the equinox.



Approximately  
20 mm

### FROM "SUN GOD" TO "SON OF GOD"

We recently located a cache of these 1,600-year-old coins, each featuring Sol Invictus on its obverse. This was a savvy move by Constantine, who was converting the Roman Empire to Christianity with a merging of religions.

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Typical lightbulbs have only one point of illumination, which cause shadows in larger rooms and poor lighting in opposite corners. This new five-point lamp spreads light to five different areas allowing you to illuminate an entire room wherever you deem it fit. The main hub screws into a standard light socket and allows up to 9.5 feet of spacing for each remote light pod. The four pods are attached by adjustable cables and each unit can be installed in drywall or studs. The main hub also includes a USB port that allows you to hook up a security camera should you desire. The lamp also has an adjustable motion detector that is capable of picking up movement up to 20 feet away.



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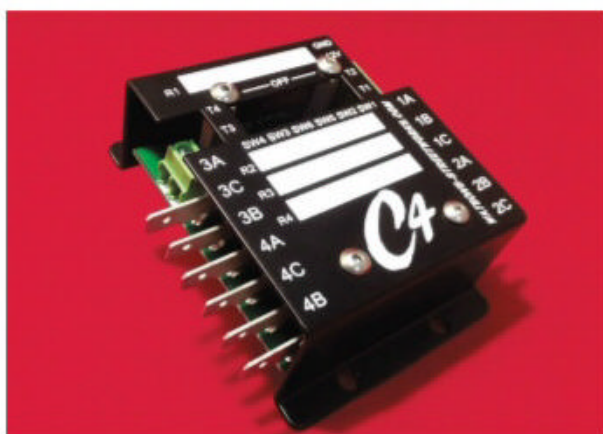
Interior dome lamps are now available for the 1976-'87 Buick Regal. The new OER reproduction unit features the optional "reading lamp" function and is made from zinc die-cast materials while finished in chrome plating. It has clear circular map light lenses and pre-installed retainers. The standard replacement dome lamp with reflector is made from injection-molded materials and finished in bright chrome. Both lamps will install like the originals; lenses and bulbs are available separately.



## Rear Bowtie Bumpers

**DANCHUK MANUFACTURING • 800-648-9554 • WWW.DANCHUK.COM • \$449.95**

Reproduction rear bumpers are now available for the 1955-'56 Chevrolet Nomads and wagons. The bumpers can also be used for sedans, hardtops, and convertibles should you be looking to remove your license plate from the trunk lid and put it down on the bumper.



## Relay Pack

**WATSON'S STREET WORKS • 603-943-7923 • WWW.WATSONS-STREETWORKS.COM • \$69**

If you're upgrading to modern switches, you will likely have a lot of extra wiring to deal with. You can easily clean it up with this C4 relay pack. Compact at only 3½ inches square by 1¼ inches tall, it features four on-board 30-amp SPDT relays that are fed separately from your fuse panel or the ground side of a circuit. With the pack, you are capable of powering two circuits independently, such as high and low beams. No need for heavy gauge or high-amp wires. It can be used with fuel pump, radiator fans, air ride compressors, and stereo amp, among others.

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## Frederic Smith

### IF HOLLYWOOD EVER DRAMATIZES THE STORY OF

the early days of the automobile industry, it could do worse than to focus on Frederic Smith as a primary antagonist. While his name is forgotten, his role in the politics of what was quickly becoming "The Motor City" equaled or exceeded better-remembered names like James Couzens or Alexander Malcomson.

Smith came from old money. Old money by Michigan standards, that is. His family had made its fortune in lumber and copper mining, and as those industries dwindled at the start of the 20th century, it looked to invest in manufacturing.

When Ransom Olds was looking to recapitalize his eponymous auto factory in 1899, it was the Smith family that became his primary investors. As the scion of the Smith family, Frederic would represent its interests alongside his father's role of president, as the secretary and treasurer of Olds Motor Works, newly relocated from Lansing to Detroit.

In 1899, Smith was 29 years old and 11 years out of college, where he had been the starting quarterback for the University of Michigan, as well as a wrestler and fraternity member. Starting in 1892, he worked as a land agent managing properties in Michigan's Upper Peninsula from an office on Woodward Avenue. His business acumen was typical for his time and class, and he oversaw the company's rebuild after the 1901 factory fire and the success of the Curved Dash Olds.

Smith can also be credited with the hiring of Roy Chapin as sales manager, though Chapin's mother complained to

Smith that her son was being overworked and under paid. Ultimately, Chapin would go on to found Hudson in 1908, partially on the strength of his performance at Olds.

The true basis for Smith's notoriety, however, is the role he played in the infamous Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers. The ALAM used its ownership of multiple patents to attempt to control entry into automaking. While George Selden's name is the one most often paired with the ALAM, it is Smith (then president of the organization) who comprised the one-man subcommittee that famously told Henry Ford that he could never hope to be permitted to produce his automobiles.

In doing so, Smith thereby set in motion the events that would prove the organization's undoing. While Smith couched his rejection in terms of Ford's two previous failed automaking ventures, it is widely agreed that his real concern was the threat Ford posed to Olds. Ford eventually overturned the validity of the Selden patent in 1911.

At the same time he was incurring the enmity of Henry Ford, Smith was also clashing with Ransom Olds, who chafed under Smith's direction. In 1903, Smith removed Olds from his position of general manager of Olds Motor Works. Olds left the company in 1904 and founded REO Motor Car Company in 1905.

Smith took Olds' place as general manager and continued to run the company until it was purchased by William Durant and folded into General Motors in 1908. Though he would live until 1954, Smith's role in the auto industry would never again be as prominent after his high-profile early days. 📷





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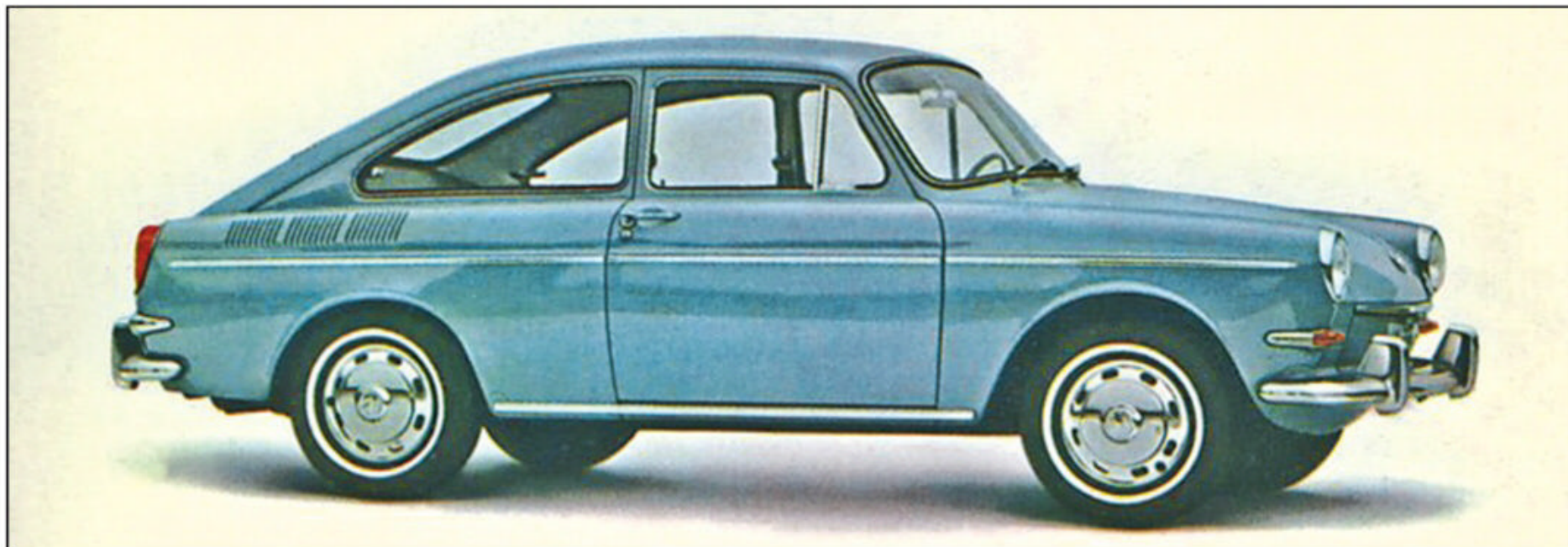
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**09-08808-001-E58071**

09-08808-001-B1



# Volkswagen's Practical Car



**I'LL BET EVERYONE WHO READS THIS** magazine remembers their first car. For many of us of a certain age, whose family wasn't named Carrington or Ewing, our first car was probably a high-mileage family hauler that we saw for sale in someone's yard that we picked up for a couple hundred bucks, made roadworthy, and enjoyed immensely because, despite its flaws, it was ours and ours alone.

Mine was a 1971 Volkswagen Squareback, painted dark blue metalflake over its original powder blue; the interior was black vinyl. To shift into first gear, I had to coast when I saw a yellow traffic light or stop sign, turn off the engine, come to a stop, grab first, and restart it until I could afford a new clutch. It had several other mechanical issues, but I never considered it a bad car. At the time, it was 10 years old, and the engine ran flawlessly even though the previous owner installed glass-packs. Did I mention it had 120,000 miles on it and I bought it for \$200?

Introduced at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1961, the Type 3 was marketed as the 1500 (1.5-liter engine) and later 1600 (1.6-liter engine). The cooling system from the Beetle was redesigned by putting the fan on the end of the crankshaft, which reduced the height of the engine's profile allowing for a flat floor and extra cargo capacity in the rear. The flat-four engine was nicknamed the "suitcase."

The Type 3 gave Volkswagen much needed market coverage in the popular sedan/saloon and wagon/estate sectors,

joining the Type 1 Beetle, Type 14 Karmann Ghia, and Type 2 Bus.

Structurally, it shared the Beetle's 94.5-inch wheelbase, rear-engine layout, and torsion-bar suspension at all four wheels. Construction followed VW practice of body-on chassis, but fenders flowed continuously fore and aft sans running boards, bringing styling firmly into the mid-century.

The first body style introduced in Europe was the two-door Notchback in 1961, followed by the Variant (Squareback later in the U.S.) in 1962. The Fastback was introduced in 1965 along with the 1600 model designation indicating the new, larger engine, and is the model I remember seeing the most when I was growing up (the Notchback was more popular in Europe). Mrs. Kroskin, mother of one of my oldest friends and pregnant with her third child, drove an off-white Fastback. Mimi Smith's mother had a beige Fastback. I can't remember what I ate for breakfast this morning or where I put my glasses (oh, they're on my head), but I can remember what everyone drove when I was a child. The Fastbacks I remember were always in lighter, less bold colors: beige, off-white, pale green, baby blue, etc.

In Brazil you will find both two-door and four-door saloons with a different fascia. The two-door Notchback and Variant were sold in Canada from 1962, but they were not strangers to American ownership in the early 1960s, being available in gray markets from overseas VW retailers or



## Anyone for half a station wagon?

Give or take a couple cubic feet, the VW Squareback Sedan will hold half as much as a big 14,000 station wagon. Which isn't half bad considering that big wagons usually run around half empty anyway. And although you can't roll a piano into the back of a Squareback, you can hold the

rear seat down and slide in a couple of full-sized mattresses. Or bring in back up space to carry full-sized people. Put all their luggage. There's also bonus storage space under the front hood. (You know, where everyone else stores their engine.) So, if you've been torn between the

roominess of a big wagon and the crash-resistance of a VW, look at our Squareback this way. One. It's much cheaper (\$2,265\*). Two. It's more economical. (After all, it is a Volkswagen.) And three. Half a wagon is better than none at all.



arriving through our northern border.

Your local Volkswagen dealer began selling and servicing the 1966 1600 Squareback and Fastback, starting in 1965, and these models remained available until federal regulations spelled their doom in late 1973. U.S. versions featured full carpeting and available air conditioning.

The 1968 Type 3 E (Einspritzung) was the first regular production German car with electronic fuel injection (Bosch D-Jetronic). Soon all would be fuel injected. A three-speed fully automatic transmission was offered in the U.S. in late 1968, with CV joint rear suspension replacing the swing axles for automatic-equipped models; the CV suspension would become standard the following year.

A restyled front end for the 1970 model year added 1.5 cubic feet to the





capacity of the bonnet along with squarer bumpers and larger taillamps and front turn signal lamps.

An interesting offering was the "Basic Compact" of 1973, with a limited number of color and upholstery options, no beltline chrome, clock, nor electric rear window defogger, but with painted vent window frames, a black cardboard bonnet liner over the gas tank, plain vinyl door panels sans pockets, and rubber

mats replacing the carpet. I wonder how many of these are still around.

Sales in the United States slowly rose from around 58,000 in 1966 to a peak of 99,000 in 1970-'71; final-year sales were around 59,000 units.

I recently found a few Volkswagen Type 3s listed for sale: a 1973 Squareback wearing thickly applied orange paint; a customized '69 Squareback with its suspension lowered

a few inches; a very nice dark red '71 Fastback; and a black '70 Squareback equipped with an automatic.

As with any air-cooled Volkswagen, parts are not a problem because of the many specialty shops that survive on servicing, maintaining, and restoring these beloved German gems on both sides of the pond and below the equator. Maybe when I retire, I will go full circle and buy another Volkswagen Squareback. 🐞

# BIG NEWS

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# Retrofuturistic Bustleback

*Was the 1980 Cadillac Seville Diesel Detroit's most advanced car in decades?*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY JEFF KOCH



Consider. Since the Corvair, which launched in the fall of 1959, what had Detroit built that really broke the mold? Corvette had independent rear suspension starting with the 1963 models, but it went no further through GM's passenger car lineup. The front-wheel-drive Toronado arrived for 1966, with its sibling,





the Cadillac Eldorado, a season later. But nearly everything else out of Motown was front-engined and rear-wheel-driven, with gasoline-powered engines sending its force out to a solid rear axle for distribution.

By these standards, the new-for-1980 Seville was as advanced as American cars got—arguably GM’s most technologically savvy production platform ever up to that point. It was front-

wheel-drive, a by-product of sharing parts with the new-for-1979 E-body (Eldorado, Toronado, and Riviera)—a big step up as Seville shed the Chevrolet-based bones of its previous generation. The new chassis was lighter than the outgoing rear-drive Seville’s, yet was roomier inside, for both passengers and cargo. Four-wheel-independent suspension wasn’t something that GM messed with much beyond Corvette; neither were four-wheel disc





brakes. Seville had both, standard. The Oldsmobile-developed front suspension utilized torsion bars, in the Toronado tradition, with anti-roll bars fitted front and rear. Electronic suspension leveling was part of Cadillac's package from the outset. Steering was power-assisted recirculating-ball, but was tuned for just three turns lock-to-lock. Save for the front-wheel-drive driveline, and the softer-than-Autobahn-ready tuning, the chassis' equipment list reads like that of a German sedan that would have cost 50 percent more.

In a bid to show that Cadillac was serious about fuel economy, the division offered GM's mechanically fuel-injected 350-cu.in. diesel engine as standard equipment; swapping out to a six-liter gasoline engine was a no-cost option. (The second OPEC crisis kicked diesel use into high gear in this country, and Oldsmobile was selling as many diesel engines as it could build.) The LF9-code engine was the only passenger car V-8 diesel in the world at that time; Oldsmobile engineered it, but all of GM's passenger car divisions from Chevrolet to Cadillac used it. Even today it's reputed to be a converted gasoline engine, but it's not: while it shared things like head-bolt locations and other machining points with gasoline engines (a consequence of manufacturing efficiencies), the block is a unique high-nickel-content iron casting, with beefier bulkhead and main-bearing sections.

The nodular iron crankshaft was used, and the connecting rods started as 403-cu.in. V-8 gas-engine components, but have heftier ends and are a different length. Pistons were made from special high-strength "diesel piston aluminum" (good thing, since compression was 22.5:1) and cast by Bohn. The basic mechanical fuel-injection package, by the Roosa Master division of Stanadyne Corporation, had been proven some 11-million times on farm tractors. Two batteries were needed, one at each front corner, in part to help power up the glow plugs and for the 10-horsepower starter motor. Power ratings were listed at 120 hp at 3,600 rpm and 220 lb-ft of torque at 1,800 rpm.

So, what's the downside? It rattled like a schoolbus, particularly when heard from outside the car; 75 pounds of sound deadening helped quell the ruckus inside, but could not completely kill it. And it was slow: its 0 to 60 mph time was around 19 seconds. Then there was the soot: spitting out unburned carbon compound particulate matter gave diesels a reputation for being dirty and smelly; today, untreated diesel exhaust is considered a carcinogen.

Diesel engines did have one other trick up their sleeve: reliability. German-built diesel engines of the time were purposefully overbuilt to take the stress of compression-ignition; they possessed a lower rotating speed than most gas engines (the Oldsmobile V-8 Diesel's redline was 4,000 rpm); diesel fuel is



**New Seville interior offered more room than the previous generation. Tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel was standard, though the tape deck was optional with the AM/FM seek-and-scan radio.**





a better lubricant than gasoline; compression-ignition got rid of the distributor. It was foolproof. Right? Well...

Turns out, GM's 10-headbolt-per-side arrangement, shared with the gas engines and using torque-to-yield bolts, wasn't enough for the 22.5:1 compression ratio; overheating, blown head gaskets, and even broken headbolts were the result. Head-gasket failure in a diesel can result in hydrolock, which can pull threads on main bolts, bend connecting rods, and even bend or break crankshafts. The chain on the mechanical fuel-injector pump stretched with normal use, making the pump deliver fuel too late. Crankshaft bearings failed because well-meaning owners were putting in the wrong type of engine oil. A water separator was not included on the early LF9 fuel systems, and the steel guts of the system, from the pumps to the injectors, would rust internally. Ordinarily, dry gas would be a solution, and many diesel owners tried this, except the alcohol reacted to the governor rings inside the injection pump and flaked apart, blocking the fuel line and setting off a fuel-starved chain reaction. Combine this with mechanics largely unfamiliar with the workings of diesel engines despite GM selling hundreds of thousands a year in the late '70s, and issues piled up.

Results of a class-action lawsuit meant that owners could claim 80 percent of the original cost of the engine in case of a failure. Plenty cashed in, and between aging out and America's decision to reject diesel once cheap gasoline became available once again, precious few remain. But in 1980, Oldsmobile's diesel was still a big slice of unconventional engineering.

It might be surprising, then, to note that Cadillac would combine GM's most unorthodox driveline and most advanced chassis in decades, then wrap in a retro-styled body. Today, retro style is less of a novelty—witness the modern Camaro, Mustang, and Challenger, each of which pay homage to older versions of themselves. Go back further and reminisce over the Plymouth/Chrysler Prowler and Chrysler PT Cruiser, themselves two-decades-old designs now.

The retro-style idea is hardly original (which is, you might gather, part of the point); GM has been a proponent of old-school shapes since at least the '70s, when Bill Mitchell imposed his love of prewar elegance. The 1971 boattail Buick Riviera had a tail treatment reminiscent of any number of sporting 1930s automobiles. Any of the 1973 GM A-bodies, including the A-Special personal luxury coupes, had bold, upright grilles, front fenders that appeared to be separate from the hoods (often with pontoon shapes that echoed the Art Deco curves of late '30s front fenders), and rear ends that terminated in points until bumper regulations forbade such styling spiffs. Whitewall tires and wire wheel covers, when available, added to the retro cues. Shoot, the original Seville was almost called La Salle.

So the 1980 Cadillac Seville



**The only passenger car diesel V-8 on earth in 1980 was the Oldsmobile-built LF9-code. The 120 hp, 220 lb-ft V-8 was standard in Seville in 1980**

shouldn't have been the visual shock that it apparently was. Forward of the C-pillar, it was a trim, lithe vision of Cadillac in the 1980s, featuring a slicked-back windscreen and squarish, solid lines—in tune with those pre-aero-slick times. Ahead of the C-pillar, it was certainly more cleanly styled than its chassismate, the Eldorado, with its peaked fenders. But the Seville's bobbed

tail recalled a pastiche of vintage style—comparisons were inevitably high-end and English, though plenty of prewar sedans had a similar style arrears. The 1980 Seville's style has since been shorthanded as the "bustleback" treatment. While you'd think that abbreviated lid would cut into the Seville's trunk space, brochures insisted that the new car had "more usable space" (14.5 cubic feet) than the outgoing Nova-based Seville.

Our feature car, owned by Ken Berger of Scottsdale, Arizona, has nearly 18,000 original miles showing on the odometer. This unrestored Columbian Brown example is about as base as a Seville got for 1980: no two-tone or Firemist paint, no vinyl roof covering, no leather seats, no CB radio, no Astrorooftop. (It does have the power reclining driver's seat, a tape deck with the AM/FM seek-and-scan radio, and Guidematic headlamp control—\$397 worth of options.) But it's hardly a stripper: For 1980, Seville came standard with cruise control, heated outside mirrors, electric

trunk release and pull-down, tilt- and telescoping-steering column, Twilight Sentinel, cast aluminum wheels, and a full suite of electronic readouts—all for \$19,662 of your finest hyperinflated 1980 American dollars. (That's about 21 percent north of either a 1980 Eldorado or a base '79 Seville.) With 39,344 Seville's sold for the 1980 model year, sales for the new model dropped by 20 percent from the previous two seasons' sales.

So, does the 1980 Cadillac Seville Diesel win the award for Detroit's most unconventional car in decades? Quite possibly. If nothing else, Cadillac deserves kudos for recognizing that luxury cars needed to evolve to survive—and for having the gumption to make it happen. 🐾









# Fun, Fun, Fun

*There's no downside to driving a 1955 Ford Thunderbird*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL







Ford quit building roadsters after the 1937 model year. In fact, the company had stopped advertising them after 1936. The two-passenger (four if equipped with a rumble seat) open body style without windows had long been the cheapest one available—something equally true across all marques.

It was also the lightest and therefore sportiest body, but in an era when sportiness didn't sell as many cars as practicality. Instead, roadsters became associated with poor folks who just needed a car and didn't want to pay any extra for something like a coupe body.

Throughout the 1930s, the cabriolet—a body similar to the roadster, but with a fixed windshield and roll-up windows—gradually took the roadster's place as the default sporty body. Unlike the roadster, the more weather-tight cabriolet had a connotation of luxury. Something reflected in its price.

For 1938, Ford dropped the cabriolet nomenclature in favor of "Convertible Coupe." Likewise, Chevrolet had dropped roadster bodies after 1935, but it teased their return with the Corvette dream car, shown at that year's Motorama. Public response was so strong that the company put the 1953 Corvette into production.

For a variety of reasons, not least of which was its V-8 engine, Ford had long been Detroit's youth brand. While the company had contemplated dropping the old flathead V-8 for 1952 to focus on its new OHV

straight-sixes, marketing savvy folks had prevailed, and Ford had retained the 239-cu.in. L-head through 1953. It had also developed a new OHV V-8, the "Y-block," to replace the venerable flathead for 1954.

Undoubtedly not wishing to squander its lead with the young and the young at heart, the company began its own two-seater program. Ford didn't call its new car a roadster—it was essentially the old cabriolet body revived—but the idea was the same. Ford's new "personal car" would be the roadster halo over the conventional 1955 Fords. In fact, the resemblance was so close that some preproduction cars appeared with the Fairlane's dipped side trim, though this was jettisoned by the time the car hit the market.

The Corvette's debut proved to be somewhat anticlimactic, thanks to a crudity of construction that Americans were no longer prepared for and a performance that failed to sway sports car buyers (who were prepared for things like side curtains) away from their little British sports cars.

The Thunderbird, meanwhile, offered exactly what the Ford roadsters of yore had given their purchasers: exhilarating open-air motoring, a powerful (for the time) V-8 engine, and build quality shared with regular Ford passenger cars. Unlike the V-8 roadsters of the 1930s, however, the Thunderbird's price tag kept it exclusive—things like the detachable hardtop and fender skirts were standard equipment. No unshaven farmers or country doctors would be seen tooling around in stripped Thunderbirds.







**The floor shifter controls Ford's revised-for-1955 Fordomatic, which now started in first gear rather than second gear. The 198-horsepower V-8 was standard with the automatic transmission.**



While overshadowed by later developments, the Thunderbird was no slouch when it came to performance. While the 1955 Corvette could be had with Chevrolet's brand-new 265-cu.in. 195-hp V-8 engine and a three-speed manual transmission, the 1953 and '54 iterations had offered only a 150-hp straight-six coupled to the two-speed Powerglide.

The 1955 Thunderbird came only with Ford's 292-cu.in. V-8 (the Mercury/Police Interceptor engine in 1955; other Fords came either with a straight-six or a 272-cu.in. V-8 version of the Y-block). What Ford billed the Thunderbird Special V-8 (a moniker that would denote most of Ford's high-performance engine options through the mid-'60s, even those not truly associated with the later, bulkier versions of the Thunderbird), came in either 193- or 198-hp versions, depending on transmission choice.

All Thunderbird transmissions were floor shifted. Buyers who opted for the new "Speed Trigger" Fordomatic (previous versions of Ford's automatic transmission had only shifted automatically from second to third gear—first gear had to be manually selected) got 8.5 compression and 198 horsepower, those who bought the conventional three-speed or its overdrive sibling received 8:1 compression and 193 horsepower. All transmissions put power to a rear axle plucked from the Ford station-wagon parts bins—the vaunted Ford 9-inch and a limited-slip differential wouldn't arrive until 1957.

Handling wasn't neglected, either; the ball-joint front suspension introduced for 1954 was a solid improvement on kingpin-based system used before and an absolute revelation compared with the solid axles and buggy springs used on all pre-1949 Ford passenger cars. Ford was justly proud of the system, derived from that found under the 1952 "Road Race" Lincolns that had done so well in the Carrera Panamericana.

The Mexican road race was cancelled for 1955, so no Thunderbirds got to prove their mettle there, but Ford

brochures assured potential buyers that the front suspension allowed the cars "to hug the road on corners" and that ride smoothness "on all road surfaces" was similarly assured thanks to "more vertical front-wheel travel."

All of this added up to mean that the 102-inch wheelbase Thunderbird wasn't really a sports car, as Ford had initially introduced it and as the motoring press of the era insisted on calling it but was in fact a grand tourer. Thunderbird owners had a competent car set up for both city and country, and capable of all the spirited driving one might care to do on the public roads.

Ted Beaudet and his wife Sue, of Lake Luzerne, New York, use this Thunderbird exactly that way. They've put about 2,500 miles annually on the car since purchasing it in 2008. They drive it "weekly, in good weather." That purchase was largely at Sue's behest.

As a little girl, Sue's neighbor was the Ford dealer in town. He brought home a brand-new '55 Thunderbird as a demonstrator and gave all the kids in the neighborhood rides, an experience that stuck with Sue over the years. Ted and Sue actually bought a 1986 Thunderbird as a family car, but it was the "baby 'birds" that were her true passion.

It was in the spring of 2008 when the Beaudets came across this car in the newspaper classifieds. It wasn't perfect, but it presented well thanks to a 1991 repaint. As Ted puts it the car was "in fair shape, but it needed some TLC." Upon bringing the Thunderbird home, he set out to provide exactly that. Some aspects of the restoration were easy, especially thanks to the numerous companies specializing in early Thunderbird parts.

That ease allowed Ted to make a couple upgrades for drivability's sake. To begin with, he added the optional power brakes and power steering—he admits the latter was something of a technical challenge on the installation side.



He also installed disc brakes and a dual-circuit master cylinder. Ford's original duo-servo hydraulic drums (another heavy-duty part culled from the wagons) may have been "double-sealed for smooth, positive, all-weather action," but it's hard to argue with the fade-proof stopping of discs on a car that is driven in traffic.

Another change undertaken by Ted was to convert the car to a 12-volt electrical system (Ford did the same with the 1956 models) and an alternator, allowing the use of readily available batteries and bulbs. With the car made into a safe and reliable driver, Ted turned to sprucing up the Thunderbird's looks. In 2009, he tracked down a convertible top and had it re-covered by a local upholsterer. In 2016, all the trim had been replated and new seat and dash covers rounded out the work.

Ted says that the top frame was probably the hardest part to locate, though he admits that now the top is almost

never up when the weather is nice. Still, it's nice to have an option aside from the removable hardtop, especially on longer journeys.

Those top-down cruises and road trips go smoothly, Ted says, reporting that the Thunderbird is a good mixture of handling and ride. "It just soaks up the bumps," he says. Ted further reports that he and Sue usually reach their destination with minimal fatigue, a testament to the car's driving manners and comfortable seats.

The 292-cu.in. V-8 and Fordomatic combination, plus disc brakes and a set of radial tires, mean the 64-year-old car is able to mix it up handily with modern traffic. Thanks to stock-type mufflers and intelligent windshield design, it's a relatively quiet ride. "My hat doesn't even blow off," Ted reports, a testament to how well the design of Ford's first personal car has aged. 🐦

## owner's view



**T**his is just a fun car. A baby 'bird had long been on my wife's bucket list. She got to ride in a new '55 Thunderbird at nine years old; she loved them then and loves them now. I restored this one over time, but if I were going to do it again, maybe I'd do everything at once instead. My goal was to make it a safe and reliable driver. It's pretty quiet unless you really get on it, then it has that burble—my grandson loves that.

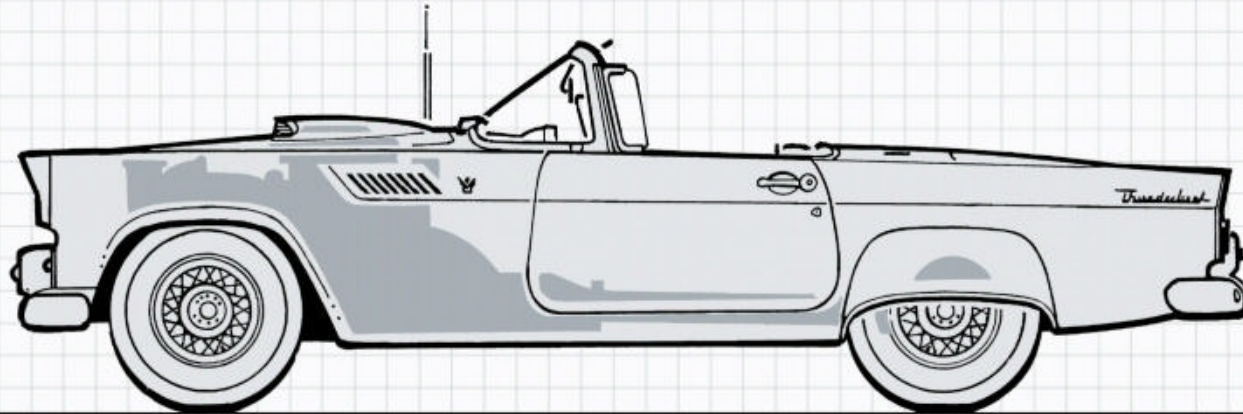
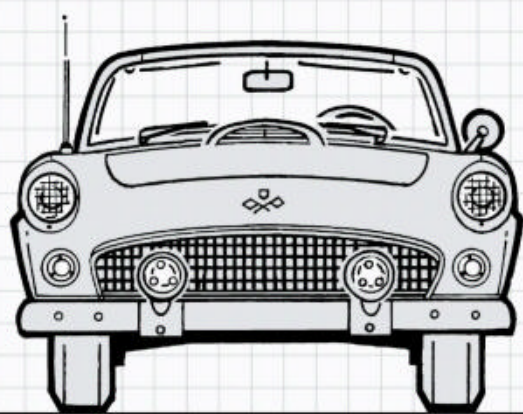
My advice to anyone contemplating owning an old car is if you don't love it, don't do it, but owning a classic gives you the chance to meet a lot of really great people. We have had so much fun with it.





# 1955 FORD THUNDERBIRD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,  
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO © 2019 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



## SPECIFICATIONS

### PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$3,191.96
OPTIONS	Convertible top; power steering; power brakes; Fordomatic

### ENGINE

TYPE	Ford Y-block OHV V-8; cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	292 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	3.75 x 3.3 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	8.5:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	198 @ 4,400
TORQUE @ RPM	280 lb-ft @ 2,500
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	5
FUEL SYSTEM	Holley 4000 four-barrel carburetor
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Full-pressure
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	6-volt; positive ground (now 12-volt; negative ground)
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual, 1.75-inch with cast-iron manifolds

### TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Fordomatic automatic
RATIOS	1st 2.44:1 2nd 1.48:1 3rd 1:1 Rev 2:1

### DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Dana hypoid, semi-floating
RATIO	3.31:1

### STEERING

TYPE	Ford worm-and-roller (now power assist)
RATIO OVERALL	20.0:1
TURNING CIRCLE	36 feet

### BRAKES

TYPE	Four-wheel hydraulic drums (now power assist)
FRONT	11 x 2.25-inch (now 11-inch disc)
REAR	11 x 1.75-inch

### CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	All steel
BODY STYLE	Two-seat convertible
LAYOUT	Front engine/rear-wheel drive

### SUSPENSION

FRONT	Coil-springs, tubular shock absorbers
REAR	Parallel leaf springs, tubular shock absorbers

### WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Pressed steel
FRONT/REAR	15 x 5 inches
TIRES	Radial (original bias-ply)
FRONT/REAR	6.70-15

### WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	102 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	175.3 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	70.3 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	50.2 inches
FRONT TRACK	56 inches
REAR TRACK	56 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	2,980 pounds

### CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	6 quarts
FUEL TANK	20.1 gallons
TRANSMISSION	10.5 quarts
DIFFERENTIAL	3.3 pints

### CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.678
SHIPPING WT. PER BHP	15.05 pounds
SHIPPING WT. PER CU. IN.	10.21 pounds

### PRODUCTION

1955 THUNDERBIRDS	16,155
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## PROS & CONS

- + Great driving car
- + Quintessential '50s styling
- + Readily available parts
- Limited passenger and cargo capacity
- Soft-top not standard equipment
- Flat or gently decreasing values

## WHAT TO PAY

### LOW

\$25,000

### AVERAGE

\$38,000

### HIGH

\$63,000

## CLUB CORNER

### CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD CLUB INTERNATIONAL

1308 E. 29th Street  
Signal Hill, California 90806  
562-426-2709  
www.ctci.org  
Dues: \$52.50  
Membership: 5,600

### INTERNATIONAL THUNDERBIRD CLUB

216-375-2808  
www.intl-thunderbirdclub.com  
Dues: \$30  
Membership: 1,400





The little DKW

sedan had

some good

points: light,

cheap, and

economical.

Unfortunately,

it was also

odd.



## Studebaker's Little Wonder

Most enthusiasts recall that Studebaker-Packard acquired the U.S. distribution rights for Mercedes-Benz cars back in 1957. Defense contractor Curtiss-Wright had a management agreement with Studebaker-Packard at the time and its CEO, Roy Hurley, was enamored with Mercedes-Benz products. He arranged for Studebaker to begin selling Mercedes-Benz cars as a way to prop up the dealer organization until—and if—Studebaker could field new cars. This gave dealers another product to sell and another source of profit. Back then Mercedes-Benz was one of the better-selling import cars.

In June 1959, Studebaker also agreed to distribute and sell Mercedes-Benz's other automotive brands: Auto Union and DKW. It was hoped that by offering a low-priced car like the DKW, Studebaker dealers would attract a lot of buyers who they might be able to upsell to a Studebaker. Whatever car they ended up selling, they'd make a profit and that would help keep them in business. It's a formula that's been used many times in the car business.

DKW (nicknamed Das Kline Wunder or The Little Wonder) had once been a large company. It began building motorcycles after World War I and by the mid-1920s was the largest motorcycle manufacturer in the world. In 1932, DKW and Audi merged with Horsch and Wanderer to form Auto Union, which became famous for its racing cars. However, WWII nearly destroyed DKW, with half the company stuck in East Germany at the war's end. A barely revived DKW was set up in Ingolstadt, West Germany, to build and sell small, economical cars. By the late 1950s, DKW's were available in the U.S. through a small, rather weak dealer network. When its then-parent company Mercedes-Benz was offered the opportunity to retail them through the 1,700-plus Studebaker dealer organization, DKW jumped at the chance.

The problem was, the little DKW had been designed for postwar Europe, not the United States, Germany, Poland, France, et al., still lay in ruins, whereas America was the land of the superhighway. In other words, two very different driving environments.

The little DKW sedan had some good points: light, cheap, and economical. Unfortunately, it was also odd. Very odd, at least to Americans. It was powered by a three-cylinder, two-stroke engine, meaning you had to add oil to the gasoline at every fill-up or suffer a seized engine. Like the concurrent Saab, the exhaust gave a chainsaw-like ring-a-ding-ding sound whenever you revved the engine, which of course didn't endear it to most shoppers. And the DKW had front-wheel drive, something few Americans could appreciate back then. How times do change!

DKW sales for 1959 were puny, so for 1960 Studebaker debuted a less-expensive model, the DKW 750 two-door sedan. Styling was decent—it even looked a little like a 1957 Studebaker—and the



\$1,665 price tag was very appealing. But with just 39 horsepower, the little DKW was like a fish out of water here in America. Performance wasn't very good; 0-60 mph took an agonizing 28.4 seconds and top speed was 70 mph, wind conditions permitting. With new Studebaker Larks costing just \$1,925 in the same showroom, most shoppers either moved up to the Lark or went elsewhere.

With few sales, the little DKW soldiered on as best it could. The price was cut to \$1,595 for 1962, which did nothing to stimulate interest. Studebaker spent money trying to peddle the little cars, but they were just too odd for the market.

It's difficult to find exact U.S. sales figures for DKW. Studebaker mixed DKW unit sales in with Mercedes-Benz, probably to hide how poorly the DKW was selling. *The Standard Catalog of Imported Cars* puts the 1961 sales number at "more than 2,000," with just over 1,000 for 1962 and 651 for 1963. That's one reason why you don't see many today.

Selling through Studebaker dealers worked well for Mercedes-Benz; in 1962-'63 they were in third place in import car sales. Studebaker earned good profits selling Mercedes-Benz cars, but probably lost money on DKW. In the end, the little DKW two-stroke sedan failed to do its job. Meant to sell in reasonable volume and add profits to the bottom line, it proved to be Studebaker's little train that couldn't. 🚂



## I LOVE THE COLLECTOR-CAR

world, but I fear that a plague is about to sweep over the whole thing. Recently I have been seeing an increase in the use of what I call “clown wheels.” I went to view a 1966 Impala for sale and when I arrived there it was being consumed by 22-inch wire wheels. I thought I was at a circus performance. It was absolutely hilarious (I mean sad). So, I began to look online at other old cars and, lo and behold, there was a 1962 Cadillac with the same affliction. Then another, and another. I immediately began stocking up on survivor gear, food, and protection as I feared that these god-awful wheels would soon come after my 1951 Hudson, '64 Galaxie, '66 Studebaker, '67 Ford Ranger, and '38 Packard. I, for the life of me, cannot understand why someone would utterly destroy the fine lines and design of a classic car by using things like this. Is it me? Maybe I am out of touch with the “latest” trend? Or is this the beginning of a zombie apocalypse? So BEWARE collector-car world, as a pox is upon thee and the only thing we can do to protect ourselves is to get into our beautiful cars and systematically run these diseased pariahs off the road (figuratively speaking). Now, as to the overuse of wide whites, that is another chapter in the invasion series. For now, I am signing off, and on the hunt while the sun is still up!

Robert Botta  
Salem, Oregon

## WHEN I VIEWED THE IMAGE OF THE

indeed very austere 1950 Pontiac Chieftain Six presented in *HCC* issue #178, my reaction was immediate: It was a minister's car. Why? Perhaps it wasn't true everywhere, but in my hometown of Amsterdam, New York, plus other towns up and down the Mohawk Valley, in the mid '40s on through the '50s, I never knew of a single minister, priest, or even rabbi who drove anything other than a stripped-down sedan, and every one of them was black.

Our minister was saddled with a super-basic black 1950 Plymouth for years. It had a stick shift, small six-cylinder engine, no radio, or anything else capable of being deleted. The only saving grace about the dour Plymouth was that the good father didn't have to pay for it. These cars were provided to the ministers

and their families by their congregation, so the more stripped-down to save the congregation money, the better.

As a child, I never understood why—when the message of the church was always about attaining a happy hereafter—must every single minister in town drive a cheap, gloomy, black sedan that seemed to deliver only the message that one had to suffer automotive privation here on Earth before earning say, a better ride like a Thunderbird, in Heaven. Even our local funeral directors had brighter looking cars.

I still think the stripped-down status of this valued survivor, were it not for those salacious wheel trimmings, clearly suggests that Father Jones or the Reverend Smith first piloted that black Pontiac on their soul-saving trips around whatever town they lived in.

Pete Betz  
Fort Johnson, New York

## PAT FOSTER'S WONDERFUL ARTICLE

on the Mexican VAM in *HCC* #179 brings up more questions than it answers. With Mexico right next door, why is there nothing about its automotive history in American car magazines? It's not like there was nothing noteworthy built or sold there.

I'm more of a truck guy, so here are some Mexican trucks not generally available in the U.S. How about the Nash Haulthrift? Mexico and Brazil were the two largest markets for them. Also consider the De Soto trucks sold there.

In the 1970s, a half-ton pickup and a one-ton stakebed were assembled there based on a 1975 International—it was badged as a DINA. There was also a two-door Travelall-looking SUV under the same name. And in the early 1980s, Chevrolet pickups were also sold under the DINA badge (it stands for *Diesel Nacional*). Most DINAs had the AMC 282-cu.in. straight-six, while some of the stakebed trucks had Perkins diesels.

Mexico also has Volkswagen models not seen in the U.S., and they weren't just the original Beetle. And so on, and so forth.

Bill Bauman  
Vancouver, Washington

## BACK AROUND 1970, HOCKEY

moms in Ontario drove one of only two cars: a Volvo 140 series station wagon,

or a Volkswagen Type 3 Squareback. The cars had everything they needed: reliability and room for four hockey stars and mammoth amounts of sweaty gear. Get to the rink, and there were fleets of them: Volvo 140s in green or mustard, VW Squarebacks in blue or cream, all with a team decal. The hockey moms and their Euro crates always got us there cheerfully on time in sleet and snow, and home again while we misted up the windows with the odiferous steam of a good game. And, unlike riding with hockey dads, you didn't get nagged all the way home.

Bob Kent  
Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada

## THE ARTICLE "DARED TO BE

Different" in *HCC* #180 missed one of the most-important automotive advances in the recent 70 years—all-wheel disc brakes. Crosley did that. For 1949, Powell Crosley abandoned the old 6-inch cable-actuated drum brakes and went to the “Hydradisc” from Goodyear-Hawley. Beginning in May 1949, the Crosley product line came with a world first—all-wheel disc brakes. Half of 1950 production also carried the Hydradisc, but problems with the system, mainly from winter driving, brought it to an end with the introduction of the Bendix 9-inch hydraulic drum brake system.

The shaft-driven overhead-cam four-cylinder engine had been around for years for military applications, but, also related to the war, was the Hydradisc brakes as used on military aircraft. Today, many 1949 and early 1950 Crosleys run around and stop nicely with their all-wheel Hydradisc disc brakes. This daring, advance choice, by Powell Crosley, in 1949, is truly one of the brightest ideas to come from a small Independent car company. All-wheel hydraulic disc brakes are everywhere today, Crosleys are not.

Jorn Jensen  
Worthington, Pennsylvania

## I LOVED JEFF KOCH'S ARTICLE

about Independent carmakers in *HCC* #180. I grew up in New York City, which at that time had a cab fleet made up mostly of De Sotos.

That soon changed, and Checkers became almost universal, and stayed

*Continued on page 35*





Little did

they know

that while

I had

plenty of

interest,

I had no

money.



## Looking Back at the Original Classic Car Dealers

For nearly 60 years, I've been a vintage car enthusiast. I attended the Old Car Festival in Greenfield Village in Dearborn as a youngster and remember *Hemmings Motor News* when it was a small magazine.

Recently, I was thinking about the early dealers of classic cars. I particularly remember reading their ads in the early issues of *HMN* and being amazed at the magnificent cars they were offering. This was when a nice closed classic sold for well under \$1,000 and other, more exotic, classics sold for the price of a new car.

As a teenager, I wrote to several of these dealers asking for details about the cars being offered as well as photos. Little did they know that while I had plenty of interest, I had no money. I still have many of those replies and images. Most of those original dealers of classic cars are gone, but they are far from forgotten—at least by my generation of enthusiasts.

One of the earliest classic car dealers was “Tiny” Gould, who operated for many years in Trucksville, Pennsylvania, before moving to Florida. Many of the greatest classic cars passed through his hands, including Duesenberg J-101 and a number of personality-owned classics. Gould's true passion, however, was early race cars. In the early 1970s, Gould partnered with Kirk White on one of the first collector-car auctions. If the Gould surname sounds familiar, his son, Donnie, works for RM/Sotheby's. Leo Gephart began selling classic cars in Columbus, Ohio, but eventually moved to Arizona. He, too, sold high-quality classics, but his real claim to fame was having owned more Duesenberg Js than anyone. For a while, Gephart partnered with another memorable collector, “Friendly Bob” Adams of Wisconsin. Adams was a former AMC dealer who sold classic cars as a hobby on the side, but eventually became a full-time dealer; his favorite marque was Packard.

In the Chicago area, there was another individual, Jim DiBickero, who regularly turned up outstanding classics in the 1960s, many in original, unrestored condition. Today, Jim is nearly 90 years old and enjoys swing dancing.

“Not a business, just a hobby. Have a good day, friends,” was the motto of Dr. Art Burrichter who had a PhD in Education and sold cars from his

home in Florida and his farm in Iowa. His inventory was diverse, but always included Full Classics.

Roaring Twenties Automobiles was located in Toms River, New Jersey, but I can't remember who operated that business. Moving west, I remember Arthur Rippey of Colorado, who operated a

museum, but always seemed to have a number of classic and antique cars for sale.

The “Barrett” in Barrett-Jackson Auctions was Tom Barrett of Arizona, a larger-than-life individual who sold some of the finest classic cars. Tom

stayed close to the most active collectors and offered his finds to them. He was a big supporter of the CCCA Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan.

Ben Moser of Santa Barbara, California, is remembered by respected classic car enthusiast Charles LeMaitre as irascible and as his mentor. Moser was an MIT graduate who loved classics, and played a key role in brokering the cars in the George Waterman collection.

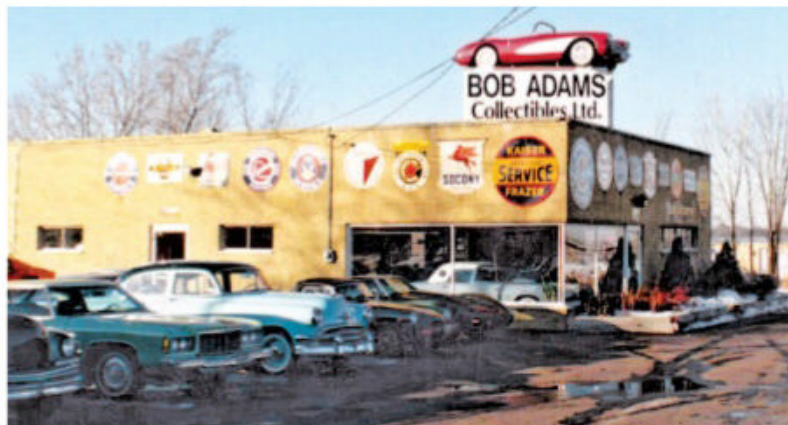
For many years, I enjoyed a personal friendship with Jack Passey of California. Jack bought and sold a variety of classics, but his true passion was prewar Lincolns; he counted 90 that he once owned. In later years, he helped Otis Chandler build his personal collection.

Perhaps the most colorful of the early classic car dealers was Mike McManus, who operated Atlantic Auto and Truck Sales in Gardena, California. He sold parts as well as complete cars, including Rudolph Valentino's Voisin, but Packards were his favorite. A member of the John Birch Society, he erected an “Impeach Earl Warren” sign above his business.

Don Williams, who eventually operated the Blackhawk Collection in California, originally partnered in Santa Monica with Lorin Tryon, a leader of the Pebble Beach Concours for many years. Williams is still selling classic cars today.

It should be noted that when considering buying a classic car in those early days one had to depend on his or her personal finances to do so. Banks were not inclined to loan money to buy antique cars. A loan was possible only if a strong relationship existed between the individual and the banker.

I'm sure I've overlooked someone, so please forgive me; I am a “senior” classic car enthusiast. 🐾





firmly in place for many years. At one point, the Gloucester, Massachusetts, police department acquired a small fleet of Checkers, and outfitted them as patrol cars. Some citizens expressed their contempt by stepping out into the street as a police Checker went by, calling out: "Taxi, taxi!" accompanied by much hooting and laughter. The other problem was the Checker's inability to catch much of anything in a high-speed pursuit. Still, what a wonderful car: Sturdy, heavy, reliable, and with loads of legroom, even with jump seats fitted, in the taxi version. The trunk was big enough to pass as an efficiency apartment. I always admired that timeless boxy shape, too—like a big Mercedes sedan. What passes for progress has taken all those Independent automakers away from us, and I think it's a shame.

Henry Smith  
Sorrento, Maine

## RICHARD'S COLUMN ON HIS

Corvair in *HCC* #180 brought back memories. In 1967, I married my first wife, who had a black-with-red interior Corvair Monza and "water wheel" transmission. I was driving a 1964 Porsche 356C, I bought new. In 1971, my Porsche was traded in on a VW Squareback, because of my kids and I used the Corvair for my "airport car," as I was a pilot. The Corvair had a similar layout to the Porsche, but they handled a whole lot different. I did not like the "floating" front-end feel of the Corvair, so I placed a bag of cement in the front trunk. Problem solved by this CG adjustment (pilot talk), and I enjoyed driving it thereafter. Try it!

Stan Burak  
Lake St. Louis, Missouri

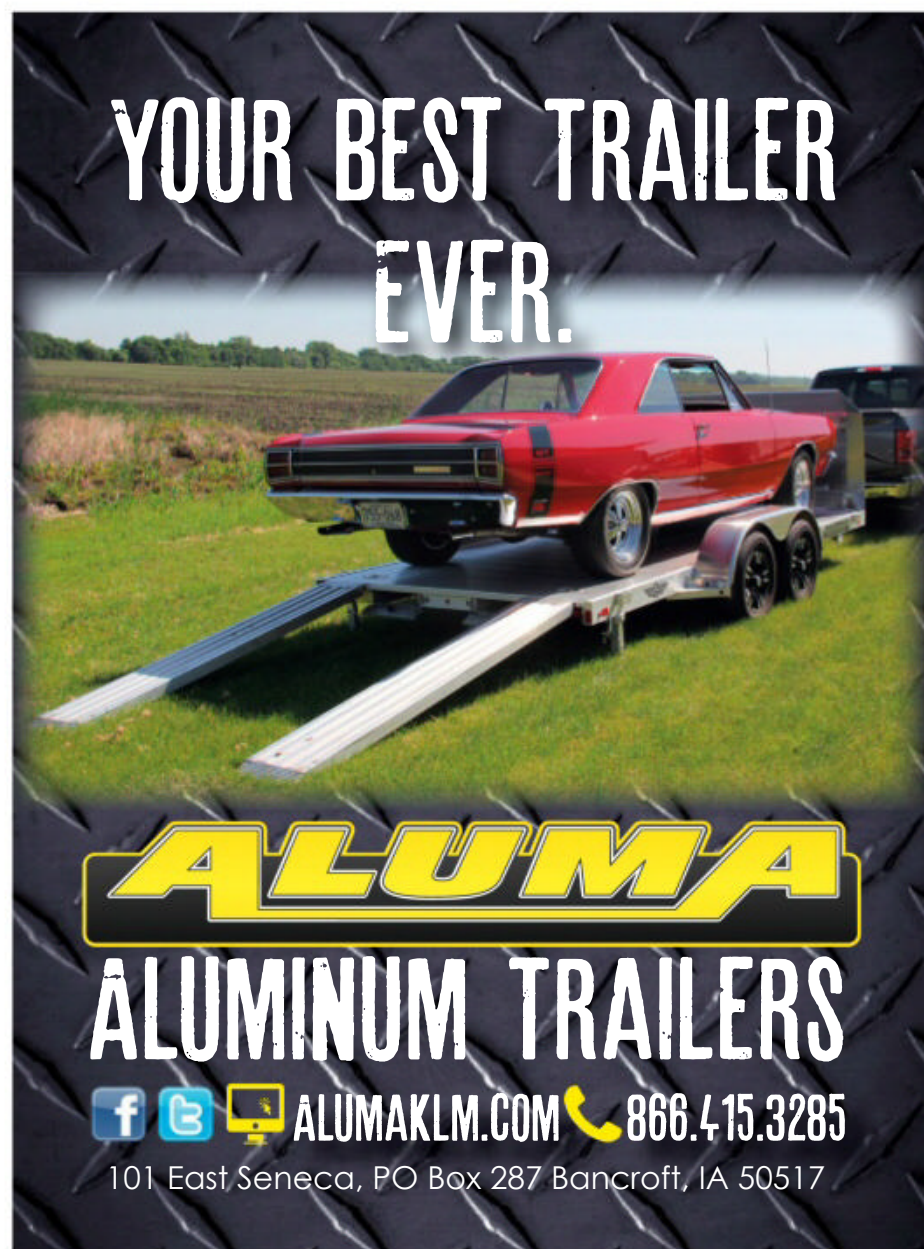
## JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THE EAGLE

Premier was forgotten, I read the Detroit Underdogs article in *HCC* #177. I owned

one of the last ones, a 1992 ES Limited. It was simultaneously a very pleasant road car when it worked, and the car from electrical hell way too much of the time. It was equipped with passive motorized seat belts that would start traveling up and down their full track at random while driving the car. The only way the cruise control would engage was when one held in the tilt wheel lever and moved the wheel up and down while holding the set button in until it would engage. Multiple times, the entire dashboard electronics would go out. And the list goes on. It is no exaggeration to say there were times when the repair shop had the car more than I did. It did my blood pressure no good when, more than once, the maintenance guys would tell me I should have bought "a real Chrysler product." My response "Whose #### Pentastar is that on the fenders?"

All the more frustrating because

Continued on page 37



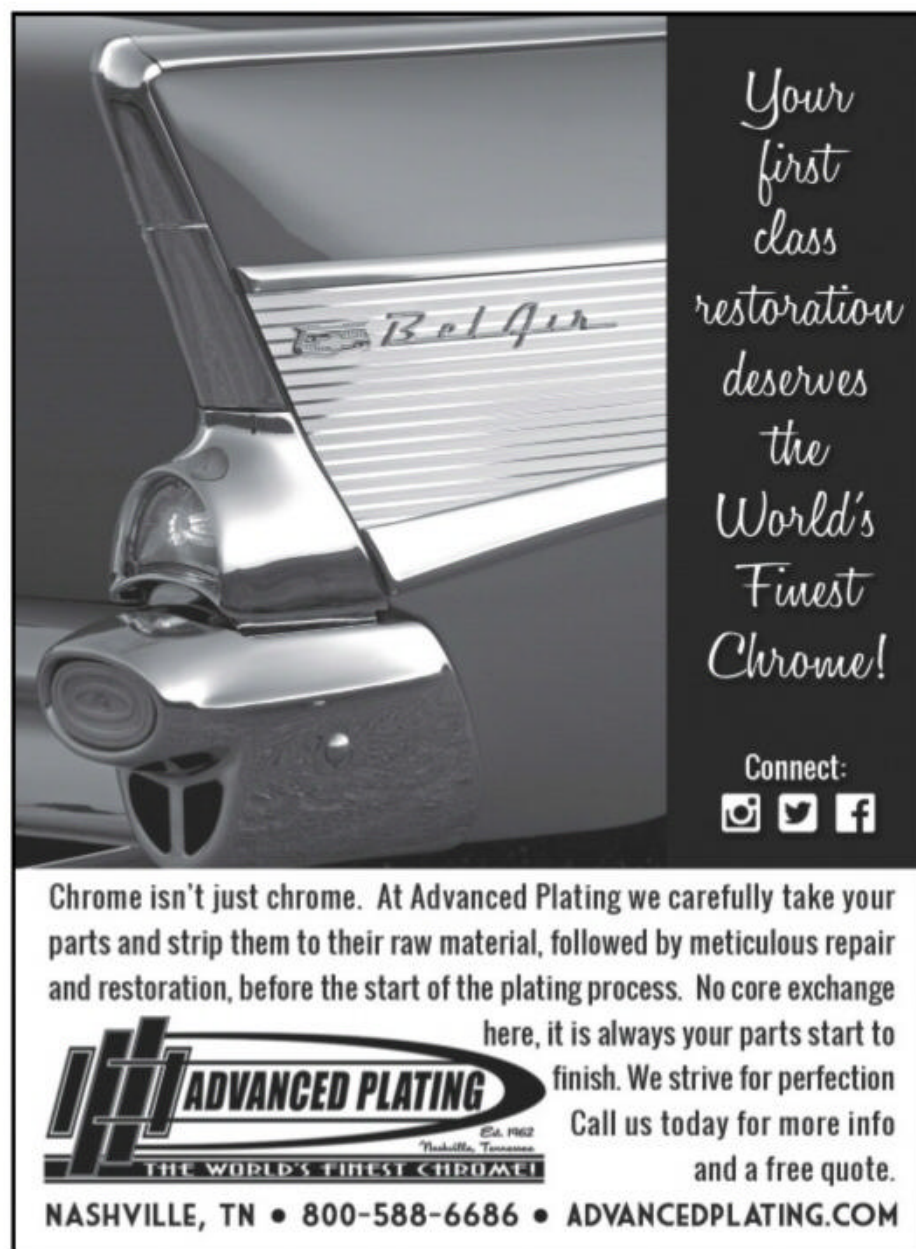
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## Boundless Respect!

After removing myself from our bar-code-clad rental, I exclaimed “Check out the Torino.” I was drawn to the Ford’s faded, Squire-trimmed, Spruce Green exterior like a moth to a bug zapper, oblivious to my surroundings, or the reason for being in a dusty, high desert hillside-turned-parking lot. It was glorious: a 1969 model sporting a roof rack, pie pan hubcaps with trim rings, and original California “black plates” that spoke volumes. The quad-headlamp four-door easily announced itself in the vast sea of white, silver, black, and deep red shod rental cars.



To the uninitiated, the Ford could have been just a basic, 351-powered station wagon from yore. We old-car types have seen them before, sometimes parked innocuously near perfectly restored muscle cars or hidden in the shadow of glistening Full Classics. But on this day, and in this setting, the encounter was monumental. We were in Monterey.

At the risk of sounding like a California tourism board employee, Monterey exists as an idyllic section of the Gold Coast, renowned for breathtaking vistas along the peninsula’s 17-Mile Drive, the abundance of fresh seafood in the bay’s Cannery Row, and its three-plus centuries of rich cultural heritage visible throughout. The peninsula is also home to Pebble Beach: two words that have come to epitomize luxury spas, legendary golf, an exquisite equine center, and — once a year — a virtually unparalleled celebration of vintage automotive excellence.

As I type, associate editor Dave Conwill and I are less than 24 hours away from our flights that will deliver us to this historic collector-car utopia. Spoken of simply as “Pebble,” it’s where truly rare and unique vehicles of yore congregate. Pebble is where people from all walks of life mingle with car owners and restorers from across the globe. It’s where Porsches, Ferraris, and Lamborghinis share space with Duesenbergs, Packards, and Pierce Arrows. It’s where Bugattis and Bentleys are driven alongside Stutz Bearcats and V-12 Marmons. If it’s historic, racy, elegant, exotic, or rare, odds are it will be gracing the 18th fairway that is the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance.

Pebble is merely the grand finale to Monterey; a far more appropriate name for the annual mid-August festival that transcends a week

of time. Auctions have long been a lead-in, and this gathering is no exception with six companies hosting sales in Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel-by-the-Sea, and Pebble Beach.

If static displays are more your style, there are a handful of events that provide a relaxing atmosphere, such as the all-Italian-car-themed Concorso Italiano, or Legends of the Autobahn that embraces the marques of BMW, Mercedes, Audi, and more. The annual Werks Reunion is another, catering to owners and aficionados of the Porsche brand. And then there’s The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering. At \$950, it’s the most expensive ticket to obtain, yet it’s where many

manufacturers debut new models and concepts amid a wide array of finely restored luxury cars, grand tourers, and track legends alike.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Little Car Show and Concours d’Lemons, just two relatively recent additions to the calendar. As their names suggest, these shows welcome a different but no less appreciated range of makes and models. Far less expensive to attend, they enrich the automotive entertainment that is Monterey.

Add to that the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion. Held at the legendary WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca, the gathering of vintage race cars is far from a static exhibition. Owners and guest drivers alike test their merit and steeds against the tarmac in four days of blistering high-speed action. It’s a small part of the week that has historical ties to the first Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, and it’s where we ran into the Ford Torino Squire.

As I near my seventh excursion to cover all that is Monterey, I look back and wonder if the owner of the Torino Squire was reliving a page from the past: A day at the track to watch the biggest names in sports car racing battle it out before the most respected names in automotive elegance cruise gracefully across a perfectly manicured lawn. While the true story will no doubt remain elusive, I won’t forget the owner of a Ferrari 488 who exclaimed to his friend, “Check out the Torino!” as I parted ways with the Ford. It was a brief, reinforcing show of respect from one enthusiast to another who never met. It could have been said anywhere. But it was in Monterey where, despite the glitz and glamour, appreciation has no bounds. 🏁

...I look back

and wonder

if the owner

of the Torino

Squire was

reliving a

page from

the past...



it was a really good road car: very comfortable leather seats, very good handling, the ABS system was flawless, and the Renault sourced V-6 engine was peppy and delivered around 30 mpg, highway. The multispeaker sound system was very, very good. Too bad the car's overall terrible reliability destroyed the ownership experience. I gave up and sold it. I strongly urged the buyer to spend the, I believe it was, \$50 to transfer the balance of the warranty. Six months later, I saw it on the used lot of the local Chrysler dealer. Where it went from there, I have no idea. At least it was out of my life.

The fact that Chrysler was able to utilize that assembly plant and Premier DNA to produce the very successful LH cars is a remarkable tale of creating a silk purse out of a sow's ear. For that they are to be congratulated. For foisting the Premier upon consumers, shame on them.

Ken Swanson  
Belvidere, Illinois

## THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE

wonderful writeup of the GM X-body in *HCC* #179. It reminded me of a hand-me-down from my grandparents. In 1991, I was 20 years old, working in the service department of a local Chevrolet dealership, and was gifted my grandmother's 1984 Oldsmobile Omega. Loaded, not one box left unchecked, with only 12,000 miles; it was the literal definition of "cream puff." I drove it for about a year before I decided that, as a 21-year-old, it did not live up to my "image." I ended up making a monumental mistake that I regretted for many years; I traded it in on a car that ended up being a POS. Fast-forward several years. I was offered another car that my cousin had gotten from the same grandparents: a 1980 Cutlass Supreme. Again, loaded. I held onto that one until it was sadly totaled in an accident that was not my fault. As far as the 2.8 V-6, my knuckles still have scars from changing the back three spark plugs.

David Rubin  
Hagerstown, Maryland

## THE IDEA OF AN AUTOMOBILE

race from New York to Paris was first hatched by two newspapers, so a great deal was written about it even before

said race began. In the 111 years since, volumes have come out, including at least two books by actual participants. All of it cannot be true, since, apart from dates and most of the names of people and places, accounts vary widely, and they often contradict one another.

Allow me to present as an example the start of the race. All authors seem to agree it was in Times Square on February 12, 1908. Most say it started with a pistol being fired at 11:15 a.m. But who did the firing? Some say it was Mayor George McClellan, others say Colgate Hoyt, president of the Automobile Club of America. One intriguing but likely apocryphal version says Mayor McClellan was supposed to start the race at 11 a.m., and when he was late, an anonymous spectator, tired of waiting, went to the starter's booth, found the gun, and fired it himself.

My question to you and the readers is: Has anyone ever culled through information and misinformation, separated one from another, and written a definitive version of the story? If so, who and when?

Chris Bullington  
El Paso, Texas

## I HAVE A MODIFIED CAR—A 1941

Chevrolet coupe—that my wife Ruthie and I have owned since 1968. It was completely stock then, but times changed. So now it has a Tuned-Port 350-cu.in. Chevy small-block V-8, TH400 automatic transmission, 1967 Oldsmobile rear end, and a Mustang II front suspension with disc brakes. Along the way it has had four different engines, three transmissions, and two rear ends, because Ruthie and I drive it—a lot, even in the snow! We've made five trips from Washington state to New England, a few to St. Paul, Minnesota, and about 25 down to California. We've driven in 37 states and seven provinces, and have driven it more than 276,000 miles... so far.

As Gary Meadors from Goodguys once said, you gotta drive 'em—and we do.

Les Foss  
Montesano, Washington

## JEFF KOCH'S "DARED TO BE

Different" article in *HCC* #180 states that the 1951 Henry J had no deck lid

(opening trunk); this is not quite accurate. In the summer of 1951, my parents bought a brand-new '51 Henry J. It was dark green with full wheel covers. It had no turn signals, no heater/defroster, and no radio. Kaiser changed to an opening deck lid sometime during the 1951 model's production. It had a trunk lid, and the rear seat backrest folded down like a station wagon. There was no package shelf by the rear window; I don't know if that's the case about the 1951-'53 models.

Thomas Lent  
Bellmore, New York

## IN THE 1947 PLYMOUTH STORY IN

*HCC* #180, author Matthew Litwin states that postwar Plymouths switched from coil-sprung rear suspension to leaf springs. To my knowledge, no Plymouth of the 1930s ever had coil springs in the rear. They did have coils in front for one year, 1934 I believe, before reverting to beam front axles for a few years.

Kervyn Mach  
Huber Heights, Ohio

## I READ WITH INTEREST

the description of Nash Ramblers in *HCC* #180 and it reminded me of the old *Superman* TV series that featured Nash cars. I can remember Lois Lane "tooling" around in her early '50s Rambler convertible with the top down but the window frames still intact. How ugly! To me and the boys at my grammar school, that was no convertible. On the other hand, Inspector Henderson had a neat squad car—a full-size circa-1952-'54 Nash with the partially covered front wheels. Living in upstate New York, I never did see a Nash police car. As a boy, I often wondered how hard it was to change the front tire, considering how it was buried in the body; as an adult, I wonder if this design limited the turning radius and about the problems it created in replacing kingpins.

Joe Turski  
Getzville, New York



To have your letter considered for Recaps, you must include your full name and the town/city and state you live in. Thank you.



# AACA Invades Auburn

*Annual Grand National Meet embraced the Midwest to great applause*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

**B**e it prewar or postwar, Brass Era or Full Classic, muscle car or European sports car, and a variety of unusual vehicles you never thought you would ever see in person, the annual Grand National Meet has them all. Hosted by the Antique Automobile Club of America, the Grand National is one of those rare car shows that every hardcore collector-car—and truck and motorcycle—enthusiast must attend at least once in their life. With 400-plus spectacular vintage vehicles on display, there really is nothing else like it.

This year's Grand National was held in the northern Indiana town of Auburn. Ideally situated within a short driving distance from Detroit, Chicago, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Cleveland, it's no wonder so many amazing automobiles were in attendance. And with the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Museum and the National Automotive & Truck Museum just down the road, along with the RM Sotheby's auction held next door, it all combined to make this a truly memorable motoring experience.

Prior to Saturday's Grand National, Friday was set aside

for the judging of the Zenith Award. Now in its third year, the Zenith Award was created to honor the best restored car—or truck—of the year, with points being scored from the previous year's meets. As one of the guest judges, having to choose one car from a group of 16 top-shelf candidates, was truly a tough task. But in the end, the voting was unanimous with the Zenith Award given to a magnificent 1931 Buick 8-94 Sport Roadster owned by David and Susan Landow from Bethesda, Maryland.

If you weren't able to attend this year's Grand National then you absolutely don't want to miss next year's meet. You've all read in *Hemmings Classic Car* about the incredible automobiles from The NB Center for American Automotive Heritage in Allentown, Pennsylvania, so your chance to view them up close will take place in 2020 when the AACA's Grand National Meet will be held there. But, in order to be part of this very special, once-in-a-lifetime meet, you must be an AACA member. To join this great club, please visit its website, [www.aaca.org](http://www.aaca.org), for all the details.







Friday's Zenith Award competition for Best Restoration of 2019 had 15 spectacular cars and a Bronco competing against each other.



Few solid axle Corvettes look as tough as this 1960 model with its blackwall tires and white covers; it belongs to Ronald Horak from Latrobe, Pennsylvania.



This 1956 Peacock Blue beauty was a standout among the many Thunderbirds in attendance; it was shown by owner Frank Krajcovic from Barberton, Ohio.



Winner of the 2019 Zenith Award went to this fabulously restored 1931 Buick 8-94 Sport Roadster owned by David and Susan Landow from Bethesda, Maryland, and restored by John Fields of Columbus, Ohio.





This flathead six-powered 1930 Chrysler Model 70 Royal Coupe was shown by owners Tim and Julia Wolfe from Sidney, Ohio.



It was a rare treat to view this early 1957 Volkswagen Karmann Ghia, thanks to owner Richard Reischman from Saint Clairsville, Ohio.



1958 BMW Isetta 600, owned by Larry Pope from Florida, and 1957 BMW Isetta (red) owned by Michael McCloskey from Pennsylvania.



Owned since 1972 by Ronald and Suzanne Morgan of Hershey, Pennsylvania, this rare 1934 MG PA Midget was one of only 1,973 built.



Cars from the '80s are always attention-grabbing as proven by this fascinating 1989 Buick LeSabre, one of the rarest T-types ever built. It's owned by Alan Oldfield of Center Point, Iowa.

In the "ultra-rare" category is this 1942 Lincoln Zephyr V-12, one of only 191 built; it's owned by John Sweet of Uniontown, Pennsylvania.







One of the best-looking cars from the '70s was the '72 Chevrolet Monte Carlo; this one is owned by John Gilliam, Holly Springs, North Carolina.



This amazing 1933 International D-1 belonging to Leo Zapotok of White Haven, Pennsylvania, was one of several prewar pickup trucks on display.



Daryl Timko from Fowler, Ohio, displayed his handsome 1936 Packard 102-B; its deep gray exterior provided a dignified allure.



Lancaster, Pennsylvania, resident Mark James brought his attractive white and gold 1958 Studebaker President coupe.

Joe Wurm from Aberdeen, Maryland, brought his captivating 1957 Chevrolet Nomad wagon.







The striking bright blue/black/yellow color combination made this 1931 Chrysler CM6 Roadster a prominent sight on the crowded show field. It's owned by Richard McFadden from South Haven, Michigan.



One of the most admired cars was this rarely seen 1967 Opel Kadett coupe; it's owned by Gaye Liddick from Halifax, Pennsylvania.



Studebaker's first all-steel bodied car was this 1923 Light Six; it's owned by Scott and Susan Mrdeza from Oakley, Michigan.



This two-tone fastback beauty is a 1947 Chevrolet Fleetline Sport Master owned by Richard Black from New Castle, Pennsylvania.



Simply magnificent was this 1922 Haynes 75 Tourister owned by Jeff Griffin from Kokomo, Indiana.



When was the last time you saw a 1929 Nash 421 Phaeton? Richard Cannon from Ligonier, Pennsylvania is its owner.



Local Auburn, Indiana, resident Richard Dove entered his 1936 Auburn 851 four-door convertible.

One truly rare Chevrolet was this 1916 H-2½ Royal Mail Special Roadster owned by John Tress from Poland, Ohio.



Another ultra-rare Classic was this magnificent 1927 Cadillac 314-A Roadster, one of only three known to exist. It was restored by owner James Schmidt, founder of National Parts Depot from Ocala, Florida.





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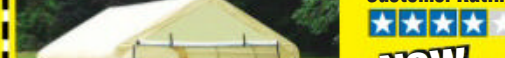
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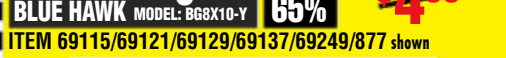
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# Oh Two, Oh Yes!

*BMW turns the real Ultimate Driving Machine  
into a collection centerpiece*

BY JIM DONNELLY AND TERRY SHEA  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA





Three boxes.

That's it.

One box for the powertrain, one for the people, one for everything else. Buyers in search of something more stimulating glanced toward sweeps, not squares, cars with folding convertible roofs and scintillating curved exteriors. That was largely accepted until this car was introduced.

The 02 Series BMW, as it came to be known, was a whole new kind of three-box sedan. The lead box contained a full 2.0 liters of rambunctious overhead-camshaft horsepower. Despite only 55.5 inches of overall height, the middle box was airy, with acres of glass and plenty of room. And the last box could carry enough gear to keep a few people pleased during a long weekend getaway.

What we're talking about here is the fabled 2002, the car that forever changed how the world viewed BMW. First introduced to these shores in 1968, the 2002 is recognized for elevating sedan driving from mundane noodling into epiphany. No less a journalist than the late David E. Davis gushed in almost religious terms about it, penning in *Car and Driver* that "nothing in the chassis, running gear, or engine ever gives the impression that it's being worked too hard. It's like effortless, no kidding. It couldn't come down the side of a mountain any more gracefully if Gower Champion choreographed the whole trip."

This was a tough, snotty little missile, born to the commitment of two BMW executives and their U.S. representative at a time when BMW was busy reinventing itself. The subject of this story is a 1972 BMW 2002tii. It embodies BMW's efforts to evolve the car as the U.S. government's strictures on tailpipe emissions grew tighter. Appropriately, it's owned by BMW and occupies an honored place in the historic fleet that BMW keeps near its U.S. assembly plant in South Carolina.

The 2002 lasted in the U.S. until it was replaced by the first 3-series cars for 1977, but its story begins much earlier than that. We'll begin





**This is a historical artifact, not a concours lawn-dweller. The 2.0-liter OHC engine, original to the car, is very authentically patinaed.**

in 1962, when BMW's New Class line of compact sedans first hit the market. They rescued BMW from financial ruin so by 1966, it was ready for a lower-priced car based on a shortened New Class platform. That car was the 1600-2, so numbered for its displacement and number of doors. The lower-content two-doors sold rapidly, were adapted for racing, and were exported to the United States.

The 1602, as some fans call it, quickly was supplanted by more potent offerings that ranged up to the 1800 ti, all using variations of BMW's M10 SOHC inline-four that carried over from the New Class. The higher-powered engines used multiple carburetion, often in the form of twin Solexes, which eventually couldn't meet U.S. smog requirements. The noted 2002 expert Mike Self told us that around this time, two of BMW's top executives were tooling around in 1600-2s powered by BMW's own 2.0-liter engine they had installed at BMW's shops, neither one knowing of the other's car. Meanwhile across the Atlantic, BMW importer Max Hoffman was clamoring for a more powerful, emissions-legal 02 Series that he could sell in the United States. The 2.0-liter version of the M10 already met air quality rules. BMW mated it to a Type 114 two-door body from the 1600-2 and the 2002 was born.

Immediate notices were uniformly spectacular. The 2002 was just shy of 2,200 pounds dry, had MacPherson strut/boxed semi-trailing arm independent suspension, larger disc/drum brakes, and 114 eager horsepower. It continued to come in basic single-carburetor and performance ti twin-carburetor versions until meeting the emissions laws was becoming impossible. The car featured here was BMW's response, the 2002tii. The carburetors were jettisoned in favor of a Kugelfischer mechanical fuel-injection system, which used a vacuum-pressurized plunger pump to direct fuel to nozzles in the intake ports.

The M10 four-cylinder was supremely durable; its block was the basis for BMW's first Formula 1 engine. At 1,990cc, it's impressively oversquare, with an 89mm bore and 80mm stroke (versus the 1600-2's 84 and 77mm, respectively) plus enlarged exhaust valves. Its premium interior augmented by a huge steering wheel—power steering wasn't offered—the "Oh Two" changed the definition of how refined and capable a sporting sedan could really be. The 2002tii had a federally clean exhaust but a half-point tighter compression and 130 SAE horsepower, 20 percent better than the two-barrel-Solex base 2002. What more could you ask for? About the only option was a sunroof.

If the 2002 had an obvious drawback, despite its high quality, it was its equally lofty price. The 2002's popularity inadvertently coincided with an imbalance between the dollar and West German deutschmark. In the early 1970s, the inflation-battered dollar was the far weaker currency. The same 2002 that cost about \$3,400 new in 1969 had zoomed to some \$4,000. In 1972, the median U.S. price for a new car was \$3,100. Nonetheless, Mike said, about 4,500 combined examples of the round-tail lamp 2002tii were produced in 1972 and 1973.

Generally, speaking, 2002s were kept cars until they became car-lot fodder after seven or eight years. Finished in Baikal Metallic, riding on factory light-alloy wheels, BMW's 2002tii still has its original Kugelfischer fuel injection, which is fully functional. That's especially rare because many 1972 tiis have had the fuel injection removed and replaced by carburetors due to the difficulty finding both Kugelfischer parts and competent service. The car has appeared on TV, having snagged an on-camera role in the Amazon original series Tom Clancy's *Jack Ryan*. If you like what you see here, BMW spokesman Oleg Satanovsky said it's possible for collectors to find a 2002tii as good as this one out there. "The question becomes how much you're willing to spend," he said. "Those cars, along with a lot of cars from other brands, have been increasing in value the last few years. It's possible to find one, but it's going to be a premium," adding that club members frequently offer well-preserved 2002s for sale.

Sitting behind the wheel of a 2002 is always a joy, not only because a well-tuned '02 never fails to live up to its promise as a driver's car, but because everything seems to be in just the right place. Perhaps one of our favorite things about the 2002 is the incredible sightlines. Unencumbered by the massive A- and C-pillars of modern, roll-cage tough cars, the thin structure and wide glass of its greenhouse gives a rather encompassing feeling of openness in a closed-roof car.

In most cases that we drive cars for these features, we get a few miles behind the wheel for some quick driving impressions, but with this 2002tii, BMW of North America loaned me the car for a full day of driving, and not just around town, but a good hike from the company's factory in Greer, South Carolina, via multi-lane Interstate to Asheville, North Carolina, and then via the incredible Blue Ridge Parkway through the Pisgah National Forest to Mount Mitchell, the highest point in the eastern United





The original 2002 formula demanded a tachometer in front of the driver instead of a clock. Interior is durable, not fancy.



States, and back again. If ever a route were perfect for such a driver's car, it would be this one.

Even without power steering, the lightweight 2002 is easy to handle, even in parking lots. At speed, the narrow wheel requires only a light grip, perhaps two fingers of each hand, to put the car where you want it to go. Though it does have that BMW-signature vague spot in the center, it otherwise offers excellent feedback to the driver. The brakes, too, offer a linear feel—the harder you push, the harder they work.

There's a discernible mid-range and top-end improvement in the tii's engine as compared to a standard, carbureted 2002, but, make no mistake, the 2002tii is still a momentum car,

rewarding the driver who keeps the car above 3,000 rpm, where all of the car's power seems to be. And, really, that sweet spot only gets fatter between 4,000 and 5,000 rpm. On the Blue Ridge Parkway's countless curves, shifting between second and third gear and back again was not a burden, but a joy, allowing an experience of the acceleration and engine braking between each twist in the road. After some 300-plus miles, much of it on challenging roads, the 2002 did not tire me out, either, making it a true joy to drive.

"It's not the prettiest car on the road. It's not the fastest car on the road. It's not the best-handling car on the road," Mike said. "But it's a hell of a lot of fun to drive. And it's practical." 🐼





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# Diamonds in the Dust

*You never know what lurks inside old buildings*

BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

**B**ehind gas stations, inside residential garages, hidden in truck trailers, and, of course, stashed away in barns themselves, the proverbial “barn find” is something that every old-car enthusiast dreams about. We all want to find that diamond in the dust.

Two years ago, I stumbled upon a barn find, except it wasn't in a barn, as most barn finds are. Rather it was squirreled away inside the clapboard-sided single-car garage right next door to me. I had only moved to my house six months prior when I spotted the telltale rear window shape of a first-generation GM F-body early one morning, when the rising sun lit up the 1969 Camaro lurking inside as if to say, “hey, look, come and rescue me.” I did exactly that once the owner's estate was settled a year later, but what a disappointment it turned out to be.

Like many so-called barn finds, this Camaro was driven daily throughout 26 New England winters and put away wet, where it then sat untouched for the next 23 years. There was more badly corroded metal than solid metal, which meant restoration was all but out of the question. The same outcome, but not nearly as bad as this Camaro, befell the Sunbeam Tiger 260 I bought out of a barn in Endicott, New York, back in 1987, and the 1955 Triumph TR2 that had been parked in a damp, dirt-floor garage in Albany, New York, from 1973 until 2010 when I pulled it out. More often than not, this is the fate of many a barn-find car, at least in the salt-drenched roads of the northern states.

Back in the late 1980s, we found a Series One Jaguar E-type coupe in a barn on a ranch outside Riverside, California. Thanks to that area's metal-friendly climate of high heat and low humidity, the





body beneath the Jaguar's sun-burned paint was as perfect and rust-free as the day the car was first built. It was truly amazing, which made refinishing the body an easy task. But that's the plus of finding cars in low-humidity climates like the Southwest.

Regardless what some pundits may say, there are still plenty of desirable collector cars out there that are yet to be discovered. Be they in barns or garages, sitting outdoors under a carport, or parked out on "the lower 40," finding one is always a thrilling encounter. The excitement of dragging the car home and restoring it back to the way it once was is truly a wonderful thing to experience; and rewarding, too.

When you do find an old car worthy of being bought and restored, what's the proper way to get its engine started and roadworthy once more? For insight into that whole process, editor Thomas DeMauro discusses just that elsewhere in this issue.

Barn-find stories are truly some of the most interesting, entertaining, and captivating tales you will ever hear, which is why we compiled several from our readers that we hope you will enjoy reading. If you haven't yet discovered a barn find of your own, if and when you do, we know you will take great pride in restoring it like new again. Until then, keep looking... you never know what's lurking behind those disheveled-looking doors with the peeling paint. 🗞

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# Collector-Car Discoveries

*Entertaining treasure-hunting tales from readers*

BY RICHARD LENTINELLO



## 1967 Camaro

Missouri resident David Abel wrote in about his Camaro, which has been in his family since new. He told us: "My sister bought a 1967 Camaro convertible new when she graduated from high school and drove it for several years, putting over 100,000 miles on it. After she got married, her husband used it for a fishing car; he even put a trailer hitch on it to tow his boat. After a few years, they parked it in their pole barn where it sat for the next 20 years.

"My son finally talked my sister into selling it to him, so we trailered it from Columbus, Indiana, to Florissant, Missouri, then spent the next two weeks cleaning it and get it in running shape. After a thorough washing and a sanding using 1,500-grade paper, we polished it, installed new spark plugs and wires, rebuilt the carb and brakes, and changed the transmission fluid. With a new battery installed, the engine started after turning it about three cycles."



## 1958 Ferrari 250 Grand Turismo "Ellena"

Four years ago, Ed Montini of Gilbert, Arizona, found this Ellena-bodied 250GT Ferrari more or less complete, but torn apart and stripped down to bare metal, in a 40-foot container parked in the Reno, Nevada, desert. When Ed opened the trailer, he saw a disassembled Ellena body shell on a dolly, quietly rusting away. He also spotted six crates of parts that were removed from the car. "I opened every crate to see what was and wasn't there, and there was about \$50,000 worth of stuff missing: all the Borrani wire wheels, Houndaille knee-action shocks, the radiator, the front bumper. The original Ellena seats were gone. More importantly, all of the correct, numbers-matching driveline was there." The previous owner had owned it since 1976, and had every intention of restoring it, until a combination of ill health and no time conspired. "He wasn't someone to advertise," Ed said. "It was strictly word of mouth."

In the four years since, Ed has been treating it to a concours-quality restoration. The Ellena will be completed in time for an anticipated debut at the Ferrari Club of America's national meet this year, to be held in Scottsdale in November. —JEFF KOCH



## 1951 Jowett Jupiter

David Burrows recounted the early days of the summer of 1987 when, at a British car show in Connellsville, Pennsylvania with his Morgan, he was approached by an elderly gentleman. "He told me that he had a 1951 English convertible stashed in a large shed at his home in nearby Irwin and wanted to sell it. Not knowing what it was, I felt anything fitting the description would be of maximum interest.

"Parked in a dimly lit shed was an almost unrecognizable car covered with a tarp and old paneling on the roof. The interior had boxes of oil cans on the seats, and the outlines of the steering wheel and instrument panel came into view. It was apparent it was some sort of sports car with bench seating and interesting rounded lines. For the first time, we found out from a badge on the front of the bonnet that it carried a "Javelin Jupiter" nameplate. I soon learned that the Jowett Jupiter (early cars carried a Javelin Jupiter plate that was changed to Jowett Jupiter after 200 of approximately 850 were produced) was indeed rare and a most desirable car.

"The Jowett was a California car driven to Pittsburgh by a Westinghouse Electric engineer which accounted for its California license plate. Unfortunately, the engineer was not aware of Pittsburgh's cold winters and not putting anti-freeze in the engine had blown a freeze plug and cracked the left side of the water jacket, thus it was put in storage for 20 years.

"The Jowett headed home on the back of our tow truck and, once home, we hooked up a fuel pump; using the crank, we found the engine was not frozen as it actually fired up with the exhaust shooting an assortment of animal bones and nuts. We discovered it had sleeved cylinders, so, now knowing the engine could be rebuilt with some welding of the aluminum water jacket, I commenced on a three-year restoration that would yield a prize-winning Jowett Jupiter that to this day still garners top awards at car shows."



## 1937 Dodge pickup truck

"This 1937 Dodge pickup belongs to my buddy Al and it's been in one of his barns sitting in the same spot for more than 20 years," wrote Mykel Harris. "Al worked for Fran Roxas restoring Duesenbergs, and other top-notch Pebble Beach winners and contenders, and had the intentions of doing the same great restoration work on his Dodge, but the truck got tucked away and work took over his time. It's completely original and isn't missing a single part. So now she sits in this barn begging to be finished."

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## 1969 Chevrolet Impala

According to Jeff Randall, "Southwest of Blissfield, Michigan, in a sad looking barn, I stumbled upon this 1969 Impala Sport Coupe. Apparently, the barn owner's son had parked it there in the mid-'90s with plans to restore it someday. After a lot of convincing (I had to explain that I too had the same car back in the '80s), he agreed to sell it to me. He did have two conditions: I had to restore it back to original and afterwards let him take it for one last spin. Deal!

"I have not yet tried to get it running, mainly because it's currently sitting on some sort of concrete grate system that looks like it could give way any minute dropping the Impala into five feet of murky black "water." So, for now, I'm just trying to get some tires for the front and some heavy-duty ramps to span the trench below. At one point, the rear quarters were replaced, but to me, finding this car was like finding a time machine back to my youth."



## 1978 Oldsmobile Toronado XS

After finding this Toronado sitting in a backyard under a car cover, Daniel Gulino from Las Cruces, New Mexico, said: "We pulled it out of the Florida backyard where it sat in the mud until 2016. It didn't run at the time, so we had it transported to New Mexico.

"It was sold originally at Crippen Oldsmobile in North Miami, then driven sparingly until 1994 when it was sold to the second owner's son. It continued to be driven sparingly by the son until 2003, when job changes caused him to move while the car remained behind in South Florida. There it sat, outdoors and never started, for the next 14 years. It was in sad shape, could not be started, and had to be dragged out of the muck onto a flatbed. In spite of the 14-year outdoor storage, rust was only of the surface variety, and it was generally in good shape. The interior had been protected by the doors and windows being closed and was in very good condition. With all the systems rebuilt and the body repainted, all that's left now to do is to fix the A/C."



## 1969 Ford Bronco

Tim McCarthy from Leesburg, Virginia, wrote to tell us about his "find." "My vehicle is not a barn find, however it is a "ranch find." I was in South Texas recently, driving on back roads when I came across this 1969 Ford Bronco in all of its Texas glory. Like a lot of old southern Texas cars, the Bronco is rot free. It does have paint oxidation and upholstery needing replacement. The previous owner used it on his ranch for 10 years, and the owner before him used it on his ranch. The engine is not frozen, however it doesn't run. I am currently collecting needed parts and will start repairs soon; I plan on keeping it all stock."



## 1956 Chevrolet Nomad

In 2006, Ted Behncke found this Nomad in a pole barn in Jackson, Wisconsin. He wrote: "Its existence came to light during an airplane flight from Milwaukee to Atlanta, and a chance conversation with a college professor. During the normal conversation, the professor asked what I did in my spare time. When I said, 'I'm into old cars,' he said, 'I have a 1956 Nomad and it has factory A/C.' Then he said, 'I want to sell it.' Momentarily stunned by the disclosure, I quickly tried to regroup.

"First, I thought this was an unlikely Nomad owner. If this was a 1956 Chevrolet it was more likely a four-door station wagon. As far as having factory air, I thought that was completely off the charts. After all, it was a Wisconsin car. Conservative Wisconsin car buyers in 1956 did not order A/C. I soon learned the professor had owned the car for more than 20 years, but it had spent nearly all its life in this pole barn. He said it had a Corvette engine and a three-speed. We exchanged information and, because I was still not sure about the accuracy of the story — it just seemed too bizarre — I soon forgot about the conversation.

"Weeks passed and, unexpectedly, one day the professor called, and said, 'When are you going to come over and see the Nomad? I've got to sell it and get it out of here.' A few hours later, I picked him up at his home and we headed for a farm where it was stored. He slid open the door of the barn and there it was just as described. A 1956 Nomad with factory A/C. It had the front end off and one door had been removed, but it was complete. More than that, it was nearly rust-free and appeared to have been repainted once. It was in fact a bit of a time capsule. It had aluminum slot wheels with Parnelli Jones tires on the rear, shag carpeting, and candy green paint on the dash — an obvious telltale of work done in the late '60s.

"I was flabbergasted and completely unprepared to deal on the car, but the professor seemed eager to sell. He offered an asking price that was more than fair. I would normally call my wife to at least discuss a new purchase, but without hesitation I just said, 'Sold.' It was a fun day when the Nomad came out of the barn and I brought it home. The Corvette engine ran almost right away and the 'three-speed' turned out to be a M21 Muncie four-speed. A rebuilt engine has since been installed and the missing A/C components have all been found.

"Lesson learned: Sometimes those far-fetched stories really are true!"



## 1960 Chrysler 300F

"This 300F has been 'barn found' twice!" Randy Guyer from Minnesota told us. "The first time was in 1979, when it was removed from a warehouse in Santa Paula, California, called 'Movie World'; it had been stored there, but not used as a movie car for a number of years. It was never used in any film that is known, so it just sat there. The second time it was 'found' was by me, when I discovered it in a garage in Virginia, Minnesota, in October of 2016, where it had been ever since 1979. According to the Chrysler 300 Club International, the car was originally built and used by Chrysler-Imperial division as a 'pool car' before being sold to Movie World. Soon I will have completed a rotisserie restoration that has taken three years."

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## 1953 MG TD

"My barn-find story began when my 76-year-old mother decided to remarry. Her new husband, David, had been a car guy all his life. I knew he had an older Porsche in his old barn, but I thought that was the extent of it," remembers Rick Trawick from Monrovia, Maryland. "While in the barn, I noticed a couple of fenders sitting on a pile of boxes. 'What are they for?' I asked. 'Why, there is an old MG TD under all that stuff,' David said. 'You're welcome to dig it out if you like.'"

"Braving the wasps and snake skins, I made my way to the back of the barn and found the front end. Wow, it seemed to be in amazing shape! After walking back, David was at the door of barn, 'What do you think of it! Do you think you can get it running?' 'Sure I can, British cars are my specialty!' I said. Then the bombshell, 'Why don't you just take it home then,' David said."

"It took a year of research and planning to get it running and Marvel Mystery Oil down the spark plug holes before attempting to hand revolve the engine had everything free. The brakes were a different story. I ended up replacing anything that had rubber associated with it, but the car was amazingly rust free."

"For the grand start party, several of my friends came over on a Saturday and we rebuilt the carbs and fuel pump, and flushed the fuel tank. Once reassembled, it was time. The start was totally uneventful. After the fuel pump primed the system, it cranked just three to four revolutions and it was running!"



## 1957 Chevrolet Nomad

"Not your typical barn find, as I planted it in our family's 1820-built cow barn more than 25 years ago," Ron Glasgow from New York wrote. "I still remember our family's test drive in this used car. It was January 1959 in upstate New York near Syracuse. My dad liked the car because it had a good heater and us kids liked it because the sides were all glass, not like the sedan framework of the 1954 Chevrolet wagon he traded in. I knew little about the Nomad significance until I became a teenaged car nut years later. The car was last licensed in Indiana in 1978, but all we did to the '57 was add fresh gas, which did the trick to get it going again. It was truly barn fresh, complete with pigeon droppings; now it's scheduled for seeing daylight and licensing in spring 2020."



## 1970 Triumph TR6

Just south of the Oklahoma border in Paris, Texas, James Proctor discovered this Triumph TR6 parked in a storage building where it had been sitting more than 25 years.

James said: "This car belonged to the previous owner by way of the passing away of his stepfather. He knew about my interest in cars and, in particular, the rebuilding of a TR7 that I owned. He also was a collector of big 1950s-'70s American cars and had no interest in the little TR6. He made me an offer I couldn't refuse to take ownership of it. I have now gotten it running and driving, but it's far from being restored. I now enjoy driving it and not having to worry about keeping it pristine."





## 1960 Skoda Octavia

Seattle, Washington, seems to be an unlikely place to find a Skoda, yet that's where Rich Reinhardt found this one-owner Czech-built gem. He recalled: "The garage door was opened in the summer of 2018 and inside was a Czechoslovakian Skoda that had resided there for 52 years. It was purchased new in Seattle, and after being driven 48,211 miles, it was parked due to starting issues. After the owner's passing, his family offered the car to me if I would promptly remove it from the garage. Hours were spent clearing out the garage, then a tow truck delivered the Skoda to a new resting place. The engine was seized, gearbox locked in first gear, and brakes inoperable. Working on the Skoda reminded me of my experience 50 years earlier, when I was age 15, when I bought a Model A Ford and got it running. But the challenges of finding replacement parts made the Skoda more difficult than the Model A to repair. Now the Skoda is driving through the streets of Seattle once more."



## 1963 Cadillac

"My Neighbor came over one day and asked if I wanted an old Cadillac," wrote Tim Granger. "He said, 'Vern is cleaning out his barn.' I told him, 'Heck no, I have enough problems with the old car I have now!' Two weeks went by and he asked me again if I was interested. So I drove to Emington, Illinois, and after looking at a 1948 International KB5 grain truck, we went into another barn and there was the Cadillac, sitting for 28 years. The original owners passed away and their kids and grandkids didn't want a four-door Cadillac, so it was put in the barn and forgotten about."

"It was repainted years ago, but there is no rust or dents, and mice didn't get into the interior. I gave him \$1,000 after I saw how nice it was. We pulled it out of

the barn with the tractor and onto a trailer. We took it straight to the car wash before I took it home to spray off all the dirt and racoon poop! (that took a lot of quarters).

"I bought four new tires, so I could move it around to work on. The engine was locked up, so we rebuilt it; it only had 58,000 miles on it. I got it in 2012 and now it's been driven 72,000 miles. Even the power windows and power antenna worked, as did all the lights and A/C. I'm 66 years old and pretty sure this Cadillac is a keeper."

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## 1934 Buick Victoria

"The story of discovery of this 1934 Buick Victoria Coupe (Model 68) began with a *Hemmings* ad in March 2013," relates New England owners John Scheib and Jon Henry. "Found in Littleton, Massachusetts, on a former Christmas tree farm, the old Buick had been pushed into a corner of the barn with no door to the outside; it was on the second level with a floor of heavy planks with small openings between. It required a series of plywood sheets so "Go-Jacks" could be utilized to push the car sideways to reach the existing door. The tires did hold air and the driveway sloped down to facilitate loading on a trailer. It was then winched onto a trailer and whisked away to Jon's garage.

"The Buick carries a 1961 Massachusetts inspection sticker and was registered for Fort Devens, a nearby U.S. Army base. It is reasonable to assume the car had been sitting 52 years. Being rare with only 1,935 built, it will be kept in unrestored original condition, with an eye toward eventual AACA HPOF designation."



## 1936 Ford Model Y Tudor

"Looking for a prewar car to occupy my retirement, my granddaughter mentioned that her boyfriend's father had an old Ford 'Something' that he was thinking of selling," recalled Michael Hines from Ferndale, Washington. "So I drove to Pitt Meadows, British Columbia, Canada, to view the 'Something' and it turned out to be a 1936 Ford Model Y Tudor. He had owned this English Ford for 20-some years and only managed to have the paint stripped and primer applied. The car seemed to be relatively complete, so I trailered it home. The engine was seized, so I had it rebuilt with parts that I sourced from England. I also had the generator, starter, distributor, and carburetor overhauled and the radiator re-cored. With the body and frame media blasted, the full extent of the car's past life became apparent. All the wood has been replaced, the frame straightened, and new metal grafted into rusted areas and past hasty repairs. Many of the body parts have been repaired or replaced with new metal. Paint, upholstery, and new wiring are still necessary before the car can be roadworthy."



## 1954 Kaiser Darrin

Glenn Seymour of Potsdam, New York, found this gem of an Independent. He said: "One Sunday at a family gathering, I was informed of an unusual car located about 10 miles from my home. It was an original 1954 Kaiser Darrin with 53,000 miles on it. The car was driven from the assembly plant, in Michigan, by Raymond LaBar to the Kaiser-Frazer dealership where he worked in Potsdam, New York. The dealer, Mr. Earl Sweet, did not have much luck in selling the car, and eventually sold it to Raymond.

"Ray drove the car until 1960 then parked it in his heated cellar; it sat there until the spring of 2012, when I removed it from its long hibernation. Unfortunately, Ray never covered the car, so it was a dusty mess when it rolled into the sun for the first time in over 50 years. After much elbow grease to buff out the original paint, along with new brakes and tires, a replaced windshield, and rebuilding the carb and gas tank, it was made roadworthy."





## 1940 Ford Standard V-8 Business Coupe

For 63 years, this three-passenger Standard V-8 Business Coupe was a single-family car, two generations of the Mourning clan having managed to drive it nearly 160,000 miles before parking it in a building on their property. The Cloud Mist Gray Ford sat, unmoving and undisturbed, for 38 years, until Robert "Bob" Hinshaw learned of its existence by chance, and was able to purchase and retrieve this solid, unmodified classic. "It was covered in dust, and the license plate was from 1965, the last time it was on the road."

The Mourning family couldn't find the keys to their long-dormant Coupe, so Bob and his brother Bill brought along an ignition key from a vintage Ford flatbed, on the off chance it might come in handy. "To get the old Ford out of the back-alley garage, we had to cut down some sumac trees and repair the sliding door's track," he remembers. "Pulling it out on four flat tires about half way out it got wedged against the door frame, because the steering wheel locked. I stuck that truck key in the ignition, and it turned! I don't know how many types of keys Ford made that were similar, but I thought, 'There's something about this.'" — MARK J. McCOURT

## 1963 Corvette

Richland, Washington, resident Bill Clarkson emailed us about his family owned "barn find." "In 1971, I talked my brother into buying a 1963 Corvette, figuring that in a couple of years I would be able to buy it from him; little did I know how wrong I was. Several times in the intervening years, I attempted to buy the Corvette from my brother and the response from Bob was always 'NO!' In June 2016, he called and said, 'bring your trailer and come and get it.' During the entire drive from Helena, Montana, I fully expected him to say he was joking or some other excuse.

"We pulled the old Corvette out of the shed it had been parked in for more than 15 years. It hadn't been started in those 15 years. It's basically an original, running, 20-foot 'driver' needing considerable work. It has a 340-hp 327 with four-speed and no other power accessories. It still has the original Saddle Tan leather interior, with a couple of tears, and the original convertible top, as well as the hardtop. The paint shows age with paint chips, different color shades from touchups and scratches, the exterior was washed, and it was quickly detailed after it was removed from the 'shed' where it had been stored."



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## 1957 Ford Fairlane 500 Sunliner

"I was on a business trip to Bismarck, North Dakota, and my friend there showed me a 1957 Sunliner he had just purchased out of a salvage yard," Todd Duhnke from Wichita, Kansas, revealed. "I told him how much I wanted to find one for myself as it was one of the first cars I could clearly remember my parents owning. My friend stated he knew of one out in Western North Dakota that was tucked away in an oats barn and might be for sale. We looked at the car one night and saw that it was extremely clean and original with only 36,000 miles. I was able to strike a deal with the owner, who unfortunately had been laid off just a few days prior and was now willing to sell; it had been in his family since new.

"I went to U-Haul and rented a bumper-to-bumper hitch, attached the Sunliner to my 1977 Ford LTD Brougham company car, and towed it home some 600 miles to Omaha on its very bald tires! I took it to a 25-cent car wash and she looked pretty good cleaned up. A few years back, we had Jerry Miller do a full body-off restoration; he does nothing but 1957-'59 Sunliners, Skyliners, and Rancheros."



## 1939 Chevrolet Master Deluxe

Reggie Mudd from Gallatin, Tennessee, sent us these photographs of his 1939 Chevrolet that had been stashed in his father-in-law's garage. He told us: "The attached photo was taken the day we pulled it out in 2013 after a 51-year slumber. It's a Master Deluxe model with a great set of town-and-country horns, but no heater. My father-in-law ran a country store in Hartsville, Tennessee, and nearly went broke because he took care of too many people who needed groceries worse than he needed money. The car was faithful for many years, traveling to the store daily with several deliveries in between. It was put away in 1962, when the steering wheel and brakes failed when my wife's sister was driving it. After we got it running, we had to rebuild the engine, brakes, suspension, and just about everything mechanical. We kept it all-original, but added turn signals and redid the interior in our attempt to keep it as original as possible; my wife did the faux graining. The exterior paint has not been touched, except for a lot of soap and water. It's now up and running with excellence."

## 1952 Muntz Jet

Some of the most compelling automotive adventures start with a chance encounter. Just ask Bill Sipko, a New Castle, Pennsylvania, resident. While on a collector-car scouting mission in 2009, and while examining a Lincoln, the seller pulled Bill aside and mentioned that tucked within the collection of cars was something far more unique from the early Fifties. Intrigued, Bill followed the seller into a barn and encountered a 1952 Muntz Jet. Production of Muntz Jet's was limited, and the example Bill was shown needed a complete restoration. It was no small task that required extensive fabrication until it was completed in the summer of 2011.







## 1959 Edsel Ranger

"It started innocently enough—I was browsing ads on Craigslist when I saw this Edsel listed for sale in Visalia, California," recalled Andrew Wallace from Los Angeles. "Although the car was clearly partially disassembled, it was advertised as '100% complete,' and the owner had boxes of extras like doors, trim, emblems, and more. Although the owner wanted too much money, it was, at a minimum, worth the drive to check it out. What my friend and I found when we arrived was both better and worse than I'd imagined.

"The four-door Edsel, which had the rare combo of a three-speed manual with factory overdrive, was parked in a storage unit, sitting on four flat tires. The back window was missing, only a few pieces of trim were with the car, and the hood had been removed, but the body was straight. Where were all the trim and missing parts? The seller said he had them at home. The Edsel had been in the owner's family for 30 years and was an abandoned father-son restoration project.

"Remarkably, the previous owner had been true to his word: Everything needed to put the car back together came with the car. And not only did I have it all, quite frequently I found I had two sets of everything, including exterior trim."



## 1957 Studebaker Golden Hawk

David Long scored when he discovered a supercharged Studebaker not too far from his house in Hagerstown, Maryland. He told us: "I have been lucky to find several barn-find cars over the years, but this one is my favorite by far. Two weeks after I sold my 1963 Studebaker Hawk GT, a man called saying: 'I heard you like barn-find cars. I found one for you if you are interested.' 'What is it?' was my reply. 'A Studebaker; I'm not sure of the year but I would say it's a '50s car, and it doesn't run.' I told him: 'Well, I just sold a nice Studebaker so it wouldn't make sense to buy one that doesn't run, unless it's a Golden Hawk: those are rare!' 'I don't know what it is,' he fired back, 'but I think it has a supercharger.'

"I didn't have my hopes up, but we made arrangements to go look at the car and I took my checkbook 'just in case.' In a scene out of any old-car show today, we traveled through the country onto a gravel road leading to a farm surrounded by old boats, various outbuildings, tractors, and more. We turned a corner, and were met with two older gentleman using a tractor to pull a Golden Hawk out of a small wooden building. I knew that Golden Hawks were rare and fast in their day, and most of them are gold, but this car was black. My heart rate started to elevate...we all know the feeling!

"I walked over and lifted the hood, expecting to see the supercharger missing. It wasn't! What a find! But I still wasn't positive I wanted the car. Then I opened the driver's door and saw three foot pedals there—a manual transmission Golden Hawk! At this point, I was totally convinced of the rarity of the car and, after negotiating a price, I wrote the check." 🐼





An inspection camera offers a look into areas you normally can't access, like the cylinders through the spark-plug holes. You may not be able to see all angles in every cylinder, but it's still beneficial.

# Reviving Relics

*A few essential insights for resuscitating a barn find*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

**A**fter finally scoring that elusive barn find, you will want to bring it back to life, so here's some basic info to help you reverse the ravages of time, the elements, small animals, and neglect.

Delving into the car's past will aid in formulating its resuscitation plan. Was it stored due to a mechanical failure? Knowing what broke can serve as a starting point for repairs. How many years had it sat? The higher the num-

ber, the more wrenching it will require. Was it prepped for storage? If so, maybe it will need a bit less work.

We're discussing OHV V-8s, so some procedures may differ with other types of engines. Get a factory service manual or at least an aftermarket repair manual for your model, as it will provide tuning specs and a wealth of other info.

Clean off the engine, its bay, and exhaust system. Mice frequently dwell in air cleaners, empty coolant over-

flow tanks, and other confined areas, so check them. If the carburetor had been removed, you'd better examine the intake manifold runners, too. Tailpipes and mufflers can also be rodent hotels.

Mark the spark-plug wires and plugs by cylinder number, and remove the wires and cap keeping them together for later reference. Take out the plugs and examine them. If any have oil deposits, major issues may already exist, or it could simply be a PCV problem. Spark-plug diagnosis



The mirror attachment for the camera allows additional viewpoints and will show the valves and combustion chamber, but they'll likely be quite close even at the widest setting.



charts covering more conditions are in some repair manuals or online.

You can investigate further with an affordable digital inspection camera. The tiny lens and light on its flexible shaft can sneak into tight spots that you can't. Insert the lens through the spark-plug hole of each bore to examine the top of the piston and cylinder wall. Use the mirror attachment to view combustion chamber and valves. Some carbon is typical, but pitted or scored cylinder walls, burned valves (edge burned off or cracks), or other obvious damage will require refurbishing.

Also use the camera to check the exterior of the cylinder heads and block in tight areas for problems, and signs of major oil or coolant leaks or coolant seepage at the deck and the freeze plugs.

Drain the oil. Some water dilution due to exposure from sitting will hopefully be okay if the engine wasn't run that way. Coolant in the oil isn't good, however. Replace the oil filter, but don't refill the pan with oil yet.

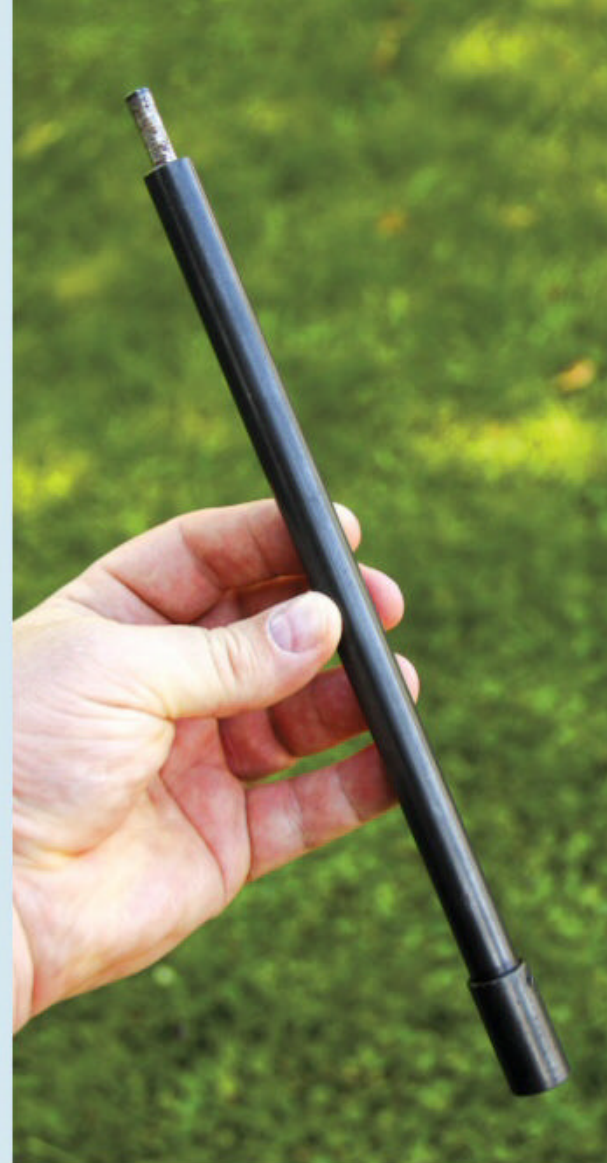
Squirt oil into the cylinders to cover the area where the piston rings touch the walls. Reinstall the plugs, and let the engine sit for a day or two to allow

the oil to soak the piston ring/wall area. Then drain the oil that seeped past the rings out of the pan and refill it with the proper amount and specified viscosity.

Install an oil pressure gauge and a coolant temperature gauge under the hood for temporary use. Take off the rocker covers to inspect the valvetrain. Mark the position of the distributor housing relative to the engine and the rotor relative to the housing, so you can reinstall them in the same location later. Then remove the distributor.

First, using a hand tool to turn its driveshaft, make sure the oil pump isn't seized. Then chuck an oil pump primer tool to a 1/2-inch drill to drive the oil pump in the direction of distributor rotor rotation to pre-oil the engine. During the process, check the oil pressure gauge and look for oil to arrive at a few rockers.

Remove the spark plugs so you won't be working against compression, and so oil still in the cylinders from the earlier soak can exit through the holes as pistons reach top dead center (TDC). Using a long breaker bar and a socket on the crankshaft bolt, slowly turn it clockwise to gently free up the rings on the cylinder walls. Having pre-soaked



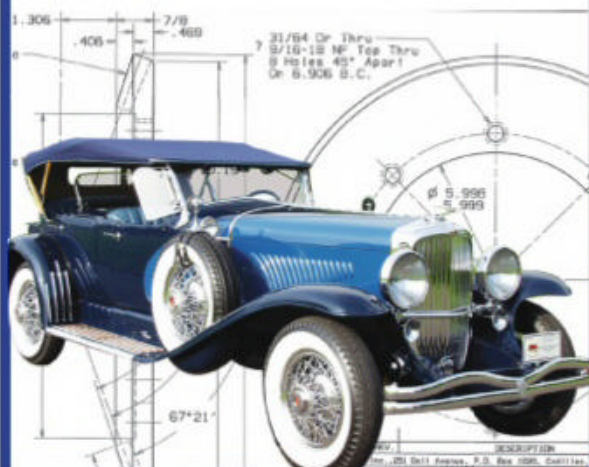
Oil pump primer tools are available for many engines, or an old distributor shaft and housing from your brand and type of engine can be used.

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Installing an oil pressure and temp gauge under the hood for temporary use will aid you in keeping tabs on engine functions while you're tuning it.

the piston ring area, wall damage or stuck rings were hopefully averted. You want the engine to turn pretty easily using the bar without notable tight spots during rotation. If it won't budge, repeat the oil soaking process. (Some prefer other products, but we've only needed oil.)

From TDC, rotate the crank a quarter turn at a time and spin the oil pump driveshaft at each interval to ensure oil delivery to all the rockers, while having a helper also observe them for normal movement. Then reinstall the rocker covers with new gaskets.

Rule out damage and excessive wear of the distributor and then reinstall it with a new gasket, breaker-points, and condenser (if not electronic), and align the housing and new rotor with the marks you made. You may need to line up the pump driveshaft with a hand tool (i.e., long screwdriver, etc.) to engage the distributor shaft to allow for the proper positioning of the rotor. Check the point gap, and install the new cap and wires using the old ones as a guide for placing the wires.

Inspect the carburetor venturis and check for proper linkage actuation. You can unscrew and lift off the top of the carb, depending upon the model, to examine the inside for anything that would require cleaning or repair prior to starting the engine. If you have concerns, remove and rebuild the carb (using a kit with ethanol compatible parts). Also, replace the fuel and air filters and PCV valve.

Installing a new fuel pump, lines, tank, and sending unit would be best. Removing the tank, inspecting it,

cleaning inside, reinstalling it, and blowing out the lines is a less ideal but quicker option. Replace the rubber hoses with ethanol-friendly ones. If instead you're temporarily bypassing the fuel system to feed fuel to the pump, make sure you use a container approved for gasoline and set it up safely to avoid spills.

Flush the cooling system and install a new thermostat and hoses, and add a 50/50 mix of coolant and the manufacturer's recommended water type. Replace the accessory belts and check or change the power steering fluid.

Inspect the wiring throughout the car for wear, breaks, brittle insulation, rodent attacks, poor repairs, blown fuses, and an ill-advised stereo or alarm install. The engine harness is more likely to have issues due to the harsher environment, so carefully evaluate it, including the starter wires, as well as the battery cables. Then hook up a new battery and look around the car for issues like hot smoking wires.

Observe the condition and level of the fluid in an automatic trans or gear oil in a manual. Keep in mind, the level in the automatic may be artificially high because the fluid drained out of the converter over time, so it should be checked again once the car is running.

With the coil wire off, twist the key to turn the engine over several times with the plugs still out to blow residual oil out of the cylinders. Then install new properly gapped spark plugs and connect all the wires.

With a fire extinguisher on hand, prime the carb with a little fuel. Reinstall the air cleaner assembly to stop the flame in the case of a backfire. Have a helper turn the key, while you're ready to

twist the distributor slightly if needed to get the engine started or keep it running.

Once it starts, listen for noises that sound expensive, like a knock in the bottom end, and shut the engine down if it persists. You may hear valve train noise (tapping) initially, but it shouldn't last long. Age-related exhaust leaks are common, and some can sound like a tapping.

There may also be some blue tail-pipe smoke initially from a little residual oil burning off and/or dry valve seals letting oil pass, but that will hopefully subside. If it continues, the engine may need valve seals, guides, or piston rings.





White smoke on startup could be harmless condensation, but if it's persistent, coolant is getting into the cylinders, and it may be a head gasket failure or worse. Black smoke indicates a rich air/fuel condition that's likely easily remedied.

Look for fluid and vacuum leaks and check the oil pressure and temp gauges regularly. As the engine heats up, smoke or odd odors may emanate from other areas. Though probably from decades of crud burning off the engine and exhaust, still investigate to ensure nothing can ignite.

Once the engine is up to operating temp, set the timing with a timing light and snug the distributor hold-down bolt. Hook up a tach and dwell meter to dial in the dwell (if equipped with points), then recheck the timing, and set the idle speed. Use a multimeter to confirm that the charging system is working properly. Vacuum gauge readings will offer further insight into the engine's internal condition. Diagnosis charts are in some repair manuals or online. You can use the gauge (and tach) for carb mixture adjustments, too. A compression test or a leak-down test will also help verify engine health.

Preparation for driving your barn find demands more work. You should install a new radiator or recore the existing one. Perform a full transmission service on an automatic or change the gear oil in a manual and examine its clutch and linkage. Inspect the U-joints, change the

differential gear oil and additives, and check the axle seals.

Diligently scrutinize the frame or unibody members and floors for diminished structural integrity due to rust or accidents. Also look over every part of the suspension, steering, and braking systems for wear, deterioration, damage, and function. Along with all the dry-rotted rubber, other wear items, and

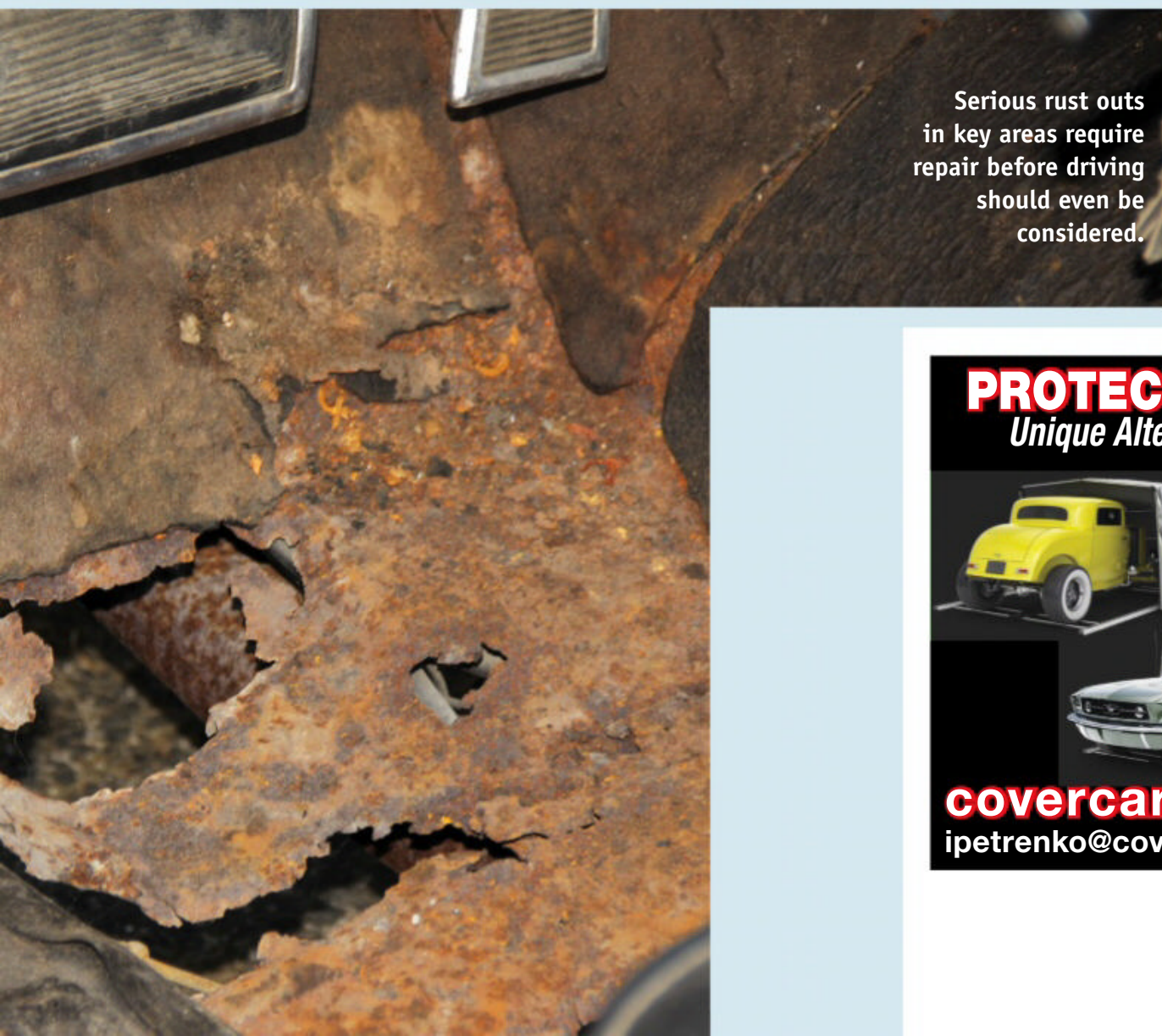
likely many hard parts, the brake and fuel lines and tires should be replaced. Check the operation of all lights, accessories, and safety features.

Fight the temptation to do just the bare minimum before attempting to drive your car. Some barn find owners totally restore the mechanical, electrical, fuel, exhaust, and cooling systems before driving theirs. In most instances, significant time and money can be saved over replacing parts piecemeal, and durability will be improved. A few barn find owners retain the dilapidated exterior patina, which is a conversation starter.

If you're unsure about how to do any of this work, turn the car over to a professional. Fixing what's required before that first ride will drastically enhance your driving experience and safety. 🏁



**Retaining the tires on a barn find that you plan to drive is not a good idea due to age and dry rot, etc. Once the car has new tires and is safe to drive, get a wheel alignment right away.**



**Serious rust outs in key areas require repair before driving should even be considered.**

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# Modified Mayflower

*Underhood accessories set this 1951 Plymouth Concord apart from the crowd*

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

There was a time when people weren't afraid to dig into a brand-new car in order to personalize it or add options not offered by the factory. Such do-it-yourself accessories as window-mount air conditioners, curb feelers, and extra bumper guards were common items for Dad and Junior to install in the driveway — maybe just a few weekends after bringing home a new car in the fall, maybe in the spring once their need was demonstrated, or maybe after a few years to freshen up a car before it was time to replace it. Auto parts stores and catalog companies were eager to offer the creative car owner myriad opportunities to improve his or her automobile

with just a few hours turning wrenches.

It's easy to think of speed parts as a different category from the typical automobile accessory, but the truth is that installing those parts on a newer car was only slightly more difficult than something like a light-up hood ornament. A high-compression cylinder head or a dual-carburetor intake manifold was a bolt-on affair that could yield tangible benefits behind the wheel, especially on a flyweight car like a Chevrolet, Ford, or Plymouth.

Modifying a 1951 Plymouth for performance may seem counterintuitive to the modern enthusiast. After all, by 1951 not only were there plenty of V-8 Fords to be had, but the outstanding

Oldsmobile 88 or Hudson Hornet, too. Consider, though, that the 218-cu.in. Plymouth flathead straight-six, factory rated at 97 horsepower, was comparable to the 100-hp, 239-cu.in. Ford flathead V-8 and Chevrolet's 92-hp, 216-cu.in. OHV straight-six. It's also worth noting that overhead valves notwithstanding, the Chevrolet engine was still using poured bearings and splash oiling, whereas the Plymouth six-cylinder had insert bearings and full-pressure oiling. It was a solid, durable basis for all kinds of upgrades.

The power equivalency between the brands was especially notable when the Plymouth's 97 horsepower was found in the 2,969-pound P22 Concord





two-door fastback (the lightest six-passenger Plymouth that year), yielding a power-to-weight ratio of 0.033-hp/pound. The equivalent Deluxe Tudor sedan body from Ford weighed 3,062 pounds and the Chevrolet Styleline Sport Coupe weighed 3,060 pounds.

One needn't have been a hot-rodder or engineer to appreciate these facts, either. Simply paying attention to stock car racing would have tipped off savvy shoppers as early as 1949, when Lee Petty (father of "King Richard") bested numerous Oldsmobiles, Hudsons, and other performers of the pre-muscle era thanks to the Plymouth's light weight. Other Plymouth racers in the era included Walt Faulkner, George Seeger, and Johnny Mantz. All told, between 1949 and 1952, Plymouth ranked third in the nation in stock-car wins.

If stock Plymouths could do so well on the nation's speedways (stockish, anyway, Petty used Chrysler Imperial suspension components to increase the durability of his car, but his engine remained factory spec), what could a dedicated Plymouth enthusiast do if unencumbered by rules? The Mopar flathead six had been around since 1929 and was well supplied with speed parts and know-how by the early 1950s. As Petty demonstrated, even the factory parts bins offered possibilities, thanks to shared engineering across Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto, and Chrysler.

By 1951, Ford was already offering the 112-hp, 255-cu.in. Mercury V-8 as an option for police cars. The Ford body/Mercury V-8 marriage was a natural one, since the basic engine architecture was the same. Ford speed enthusiasts had been making the conversion to Mercury power since the first Mercury V-8's hit the junkyards in late 1939. A similar relationship existed between Plymouth and Dodge, with the 103-hp, 230-cu.in. Dodge flat-head six a bolt-in swap.

That's almost exactly what was done to this 1951 Plymouth. At some point in its past, the original 218 engine was removed and a 1958 Dodge 138-hp six-cylinder was bolted in its place. To it were added an Edmunds intake manifold with dual one-barrel carburetors, a higher lift Crower camshaft, and an exhaust header flowing into dual exhausts with glasspack mufflers. Similar modifications made to the 1956 Plymouth 230 bumped power from 125 to 131 hp, so it is fair to speculate that the engine in our feature car is pushing 145 horsepower with no additional bulk—giving a power-to-weight ratio (0.049) in the neighborhood of a 1951 Chrysler New Yorker with the 180-hp, 331-cu.in. Firepower V-8 (0.043).



The instrument panel and window garnish trim, originally woodgrained, were refinished in the same Wedgewood Blue as the body, convertible style, which nicely complements the white steering wheel. Notice the Westach tachometer, which allows the driver to see the rpm drop when the overdrive engages. Red carpets replaced original rubber mats.



Another performance-minded upgrade to this lovely old Plymouth, also entirely period-correct, is the installation of overdrive. Chrysler was a pioneer in overdrive technology, having done the engineering on the famed Borg-Warner units back in the 1930s, but the Plymouth line didn't receive the option until the 1952 model year (the oft-misunderstood semi-automatic transmission, a Chrysler breakthrough of the 1940s, didn't become a Plymouth option until 1953).

With available rear-axle ratios of 3.73:1 or 3.90:1, the overdrive provides a welcome extension of the Plymouth's

legs while on the open road. Our feature car has 3.73 gears, which act like 2.61s when overdrive is engaged. Because the overdrive parts were provided over-the-counter for installation in cars as early as 1946, its presence in our feature car may date back as early as 1952—like the 230 under the hood, the installation does nothing to detract from the vintage presentation of the car.

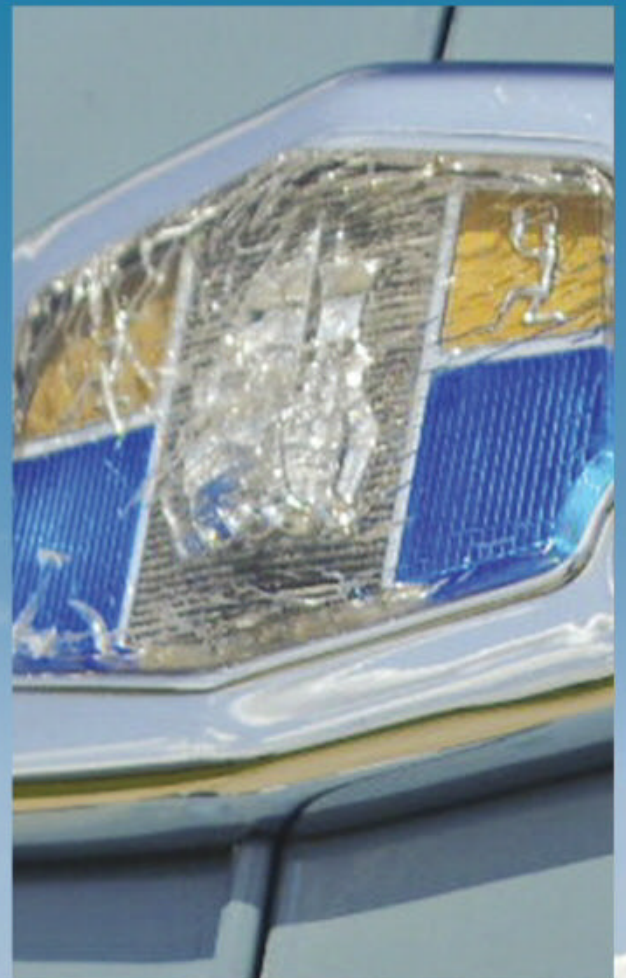
Overdrive is an important feature to owner Nicholas Essinger, of Troy, Ohio. Nicholas has a long line of light-blue Plymouths in his past, with his parents having owned a 1952 Plymouth Club

Coupe and later a 1958 Plymouth Custom Suburban nine-passenger station wagon, both finished in that oh-so-Fifties hue. His parents' experience with Chrysler products led him to purchase a new 1963 Chrysler Newport hardtop (in light blue) just before entering the armed forces.

While modern Chryslers are of a decidedly different ilk from their pre-K-car ancestors, the older models remain accessible, affordable, and eminently useable. That's especially true for those that don't say GTX, Road Runner, or 'Cuda on the side. Back in 2009, Nicholas purchased a 1948 Plymouth Special Deluxe, one of



*...I like  
to see  
the engine  
rpm drop  
30 percent  
when I shift  
into overdrive.*





the P15 models that has such a dedicated following these days. While it was painted maroon rather than light blue, the biggest issue Nicholas found with the car was its lack of overdrive.

"That Plymouth was a great car," he recalls, echoing Plymouth's own advertising of the era. "Then or now. It had excellent steering, shifting, braking, and general operation. It had good outward visibility and plenty of room inside the car for the 1940s, but it did not have overdrive, which I felt was required for relaxed highway driving."

The P15 was eventually passed on to one of Nicholas' doctors at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (who subsequently retrofit overdrive) and Nicholas went looking for a similar car, but with overdrive already installed and from the 1949-'52 short-wheelbase line with the fastback body style. He started his search in the spring of 2016 and by July, he had found his car. It came from a fellow member of the Plymouth Owners Club out in Washington and it was even appropriately finished in Wedgewood Blue.

The car had been partially restored almost 20 years previous and had accumulated just enough wear and tear in the interim to make Nicholas feel good about driving it. "The restoration was good," he says, "The undercarriage is beautiful, as are the body and the chrome. There are a few stone chips on the blue paint, but that is the price one pays to drive such a wonderful car."

Inside, similar sentiments prevail. "The interior is really fabulous: It's a neutral light tan and gray broadcloth material in a striped pattern, with maroon lower seats, door trim and arm rests. It just might be mostly original, but I'm pleased that they did not leave the original light-gray wood-tone on the dash and window garnish—I've seen a few others and it's boring, not like the darker walnut of previous years. Instead, it was painted the same light blue as the body and is more attractive." Similarly, the original-equipment rubber floor mats were replaced with red carpet.

That interior makes for a nice place to while away the miles. Chrysler's focus on designing cars from the inside out may have resulted in less showroom traffic, but it makes for a great road trip car. "That cowl vent," Nicholas says, pointing out an old-fashioned feature that was already starting to go away in 1951, "is greatly appreciated. The front vents open and the side windows all roll down to allow fresh air to move through. The front seat moves for a comfortable driving position and to give a good view of the instrument panel—which is equipped with full gauges—and it has excellent visibility,



**The original 97-hp, 218-cu.in. flathead six-cylinder was replaced with a 230-cu.in. six from a 1958 Dodge equipped with aftermarket speed parts—intake manifold, camshaft, and header.**

especially out the back glass. This is not a big Chrysler sedan, but there is adequate room for six people." Those passengers will ride in comfort, too, thanks to "Air-foam seat cushions, and lots of leg and head room, especially in back."

To dial in the car for all the driving, Nicholas made just a few more changes and saw to a bit of maintenance when he got the car home. The first order of business was to finish wiring up the overdrive, a task he entrusted to Hudson enthusiast Noel Renner, also of Troy. Noel also installed a Westach tachometer for Nicholas. "I'm not into hot-rodding or rallying, but I like to see the engine rpm drop 30 percent when I shift into overdrive."

Other additions include seatbelts

and a set of curb feelers to protect the BFGoodrich Silvertown wide-whitewall tires. To ensure maximum tread life, Nicholas had the wheels aligned, and it was now ready to go enjoy the rumble of the dual glasspacks on the open road.

Since then, the car has racked up the miles, including a 422-mile road trip to the Plymouth Grand Nationals in Novi and Northville, Michigan, in July 2018. Nicholas describes that trip as "pure enjoyment," cruising between 52 and 56 mph in the slow lane and receiving "a lot of thumbs up" along the way. He even reports the big Dodge six "used no oil and yielded about 20 mpg." It seems there's something to be said for all those period accessories. 🏁





# AMC's Matador

*The “Philosophy of Difference” set the coupe apart from the competition*

BY PATRICK FOSTER • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

In 1969, American Motors Corporation chairman and CEO Roy Chapin Jr. made a bold announcement to the press: For the next three years, AMC would introduce a new car every six months—a total of six new products.

Suffering from declining sales, the company came close to bankruptcy in 1967, a situation that brought Chapin into power and forced predecessor Roy Abernethy into early retirement. Chapin and AMC president William Luneburg worked to cut costs and devise a new product program to pull the company out of the hole. They managed small profits in 1968

and 1969 while stylists labored to design the new cars. By the fall of 1969, Chapin was ready to announce the new Hornet, but decided to make a bigger splash with the “new car every six months” idea. It was a very gutsy move that got attention. First came the 1970 Hornet, then six months later the Gremlin. A heavily revised Rebel was introduced as the new Matador for 1971, along with an all-new Javelin and Javelin/AMX. Then came 1972 and...nothing. Management took a pause from all that capital spending and focused attention on its innovative new warranty program called the Buyer Protection Plan.

For the 1973 model year, AMC introduced the Hornet hatchback, which *Car and Driver* dubbed “The Styling Coupe of 1973” followed by the car many think was actually supposed to debut for 1972—the stylish Matador coupe. What we think may have happened—and much of this is speculation—is that the Rebel line originally was supposed to get a minor facelift for 1971, followed by the all-new coupe for 1972 that would debut in the fall of 1971, which would be followed six months later by all new sedans and wagons. But for reasons unknown, the Rebel facelift became the new Matador for 1971, and the



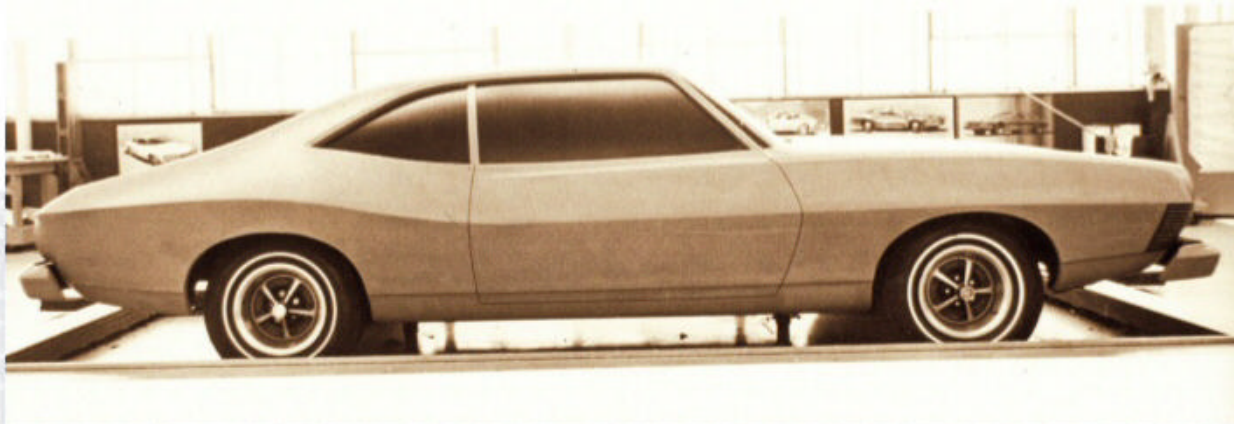


**The 1974 Matador 'X' was the sporty model in the Matador coupe line that year. The slotted wheels, side stripe, and sports steering wheel were all standard equipment.**

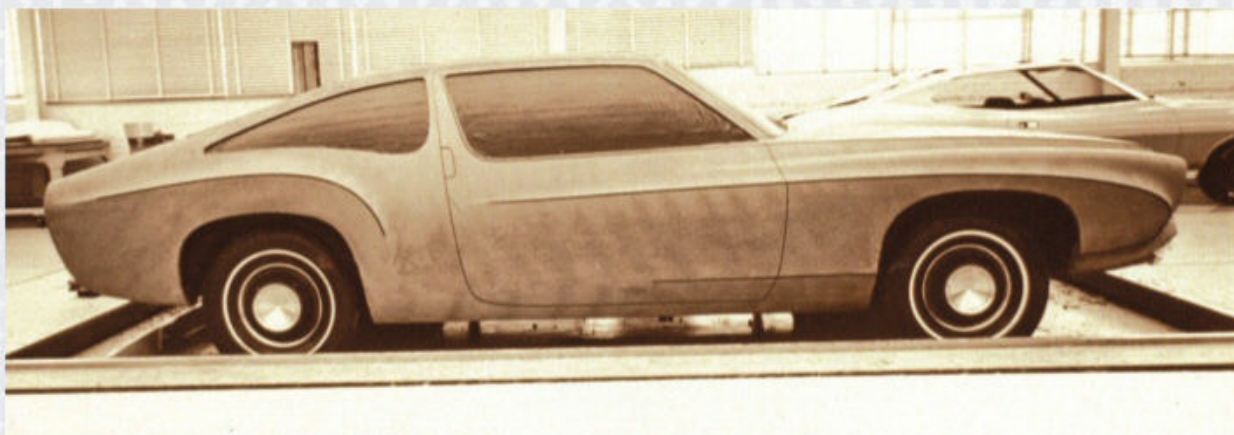
all-new coupe was delayed. It may have been caused solely by AMC's purchase of Jeep in 1970 that used up a lot of cash. In the end, the new coupe was scheduled for introduction as a 1974 model.

Dick Teague was AMC's Vice President of Styling at the time, but the responsibility for actually designing the new car rested on the manager of the AMC Passenger Car design studios, Bob Nixon, who'd earlier led teams that designed the successful Javelin, AMX, and Hornet, and had also worked on the Gremlin.

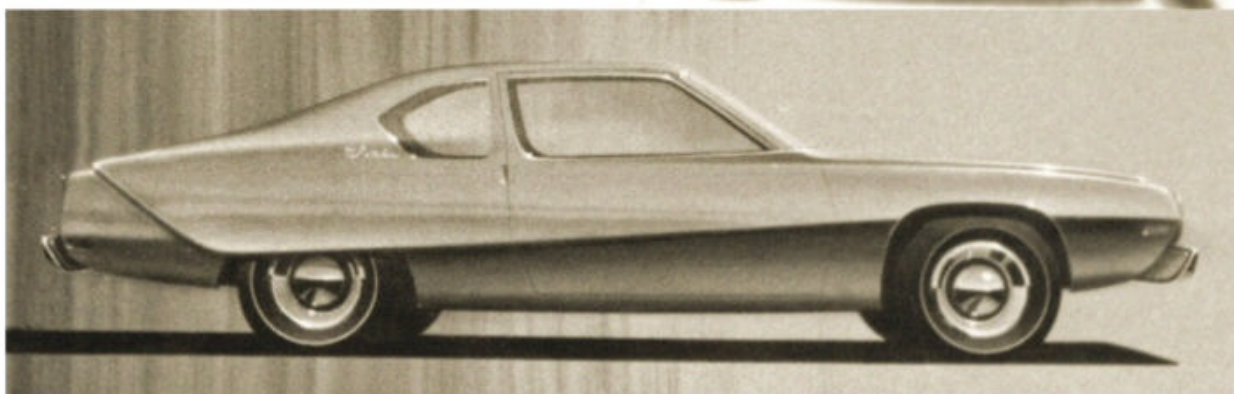
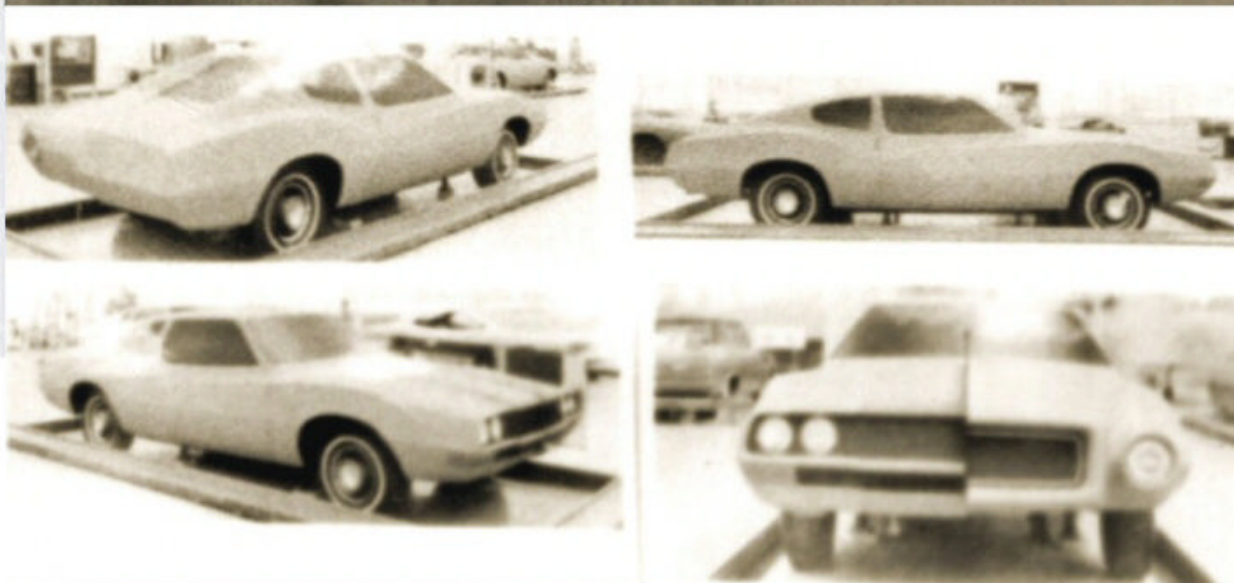
Gerry Meyers' product planners had already worked out the basic "package" for



**Early coupe clay shows a more conventional roofline and side window treatment, and was considered too conservative.**



**Another early clay shows the beginning of the evolution of the side window and "B" pillar. Note the heavy side sculpturing.**



**The two alternative designs shown here never made it to the clay model stage.**





**This rendering shows a car much closer to production, but with a squarish rear side window and louvers. The kick-up rear deck on this version is rather interesting. Note the square taillamps.**

the new car, i.e., overall dimensions, seating capacity, and the basic design concept. Using AMC's so-called "Philosophy of Difference" as their guide, they decided the new car should be a sleek, youthful fast-back. After all, the rest of the industry was mostly fielding formal coupes with upright or semi-fastback rooflines. If AMC hoped to stand out from the rest, it needed to offer a different look. It seemed to make sense: Having distinctive styling had worked with the Gremlin and Hornet. However, small-car buyers are historically more open to innovation. Large-car buyers, on the other hand, tend to be more conservative and like to follow whatever the current fashion is. With the new coupe, AMC's Philosophy of Difference would be put to the test.

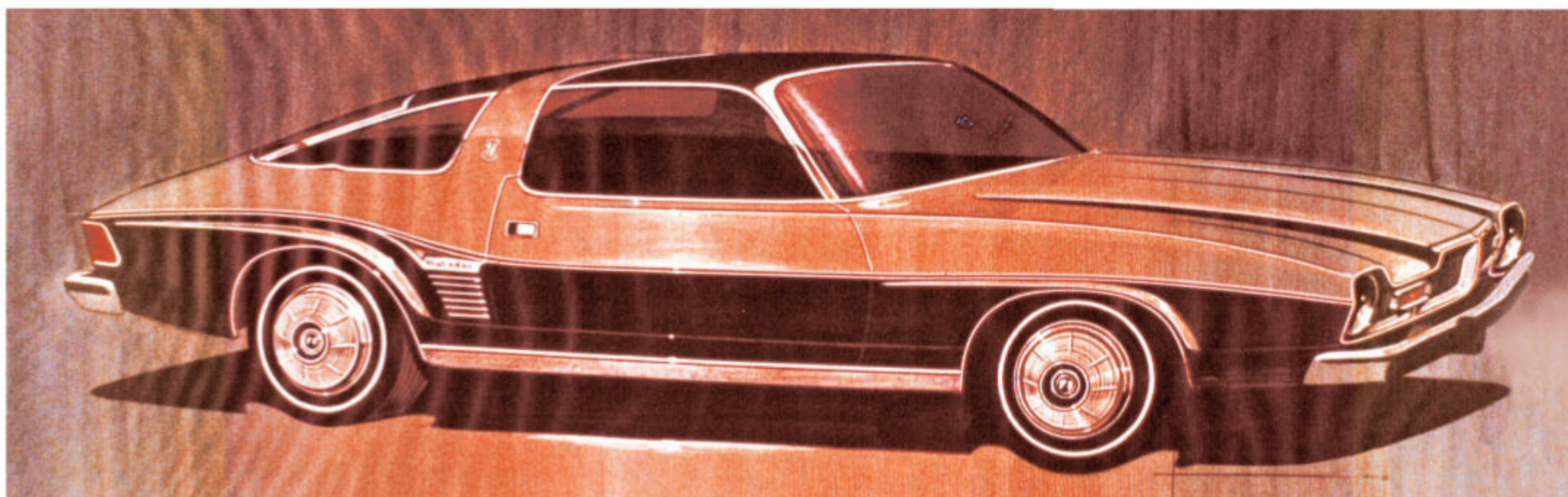
Nixon had earlier successfully

designed a stylish roofline to fit both the two- and four-door Hornet sedans, but Meyers didn't want to use that cost-saving approach with the new Matador. He felt it better to copy the Big Three practice of utilizing two entirely separate body shells; one for two-door models, the other for sedans and station wagons. Naturally, it would drive tooling costs through the roof; AMC spent \$40 million tooling the complete Hornet lineup, but would shell out that much just for the Matador coupe. If sales greatly increased, however, it would be worth it. If sales didn't increase? Meyers apparently didn't consider that possibility. Sales had climbed rapidly in 1972 and 1973, and management was becoming a bit cocky, thinking AMC was bigger and stronger than it really was.

In any event, work on the new car began. An earlier coupe design, probably done around 1970, was considered too Ford-like and dated, so it was out of consideration now, though the basic package dimensions remained about the same. A series of sketches were created and from them Teague and Nixon chose a few ideas to focus on. As usual, small clay models were the first step before going full size.

The new car was going to be completely unlike its predecessor, the Rebel/Matador hardtop, with its thick flanks and overall chunky styling. So chunky was its shape that when the Matador hardtop first appeared on a NASCAR racetrack it was dubbed the "Flying Brick." However, the new car would have much lower lines, with the classic long hood/short deck proportions that were popular back then. It would feature a 114-inch wheelbase, 4 inches shorter than the sedan, and an overall length of 209.4 inches, half a foot shorter.

And the new Matador would be a coupe, not a hardtop like the old car. Safety was now a big consideration in car design, and hardtops were on the way out. General Motors had shown the way of the future when it debuted its revolutionary "Colonnade" styling for 1973. Instead of true hardtops, the new GM coupes used



**This sleek design has square shaped front fenders and a prominent hood bulge. The "B" pillar is rather thick though, and the rear fender sculpturing seems excessive.**





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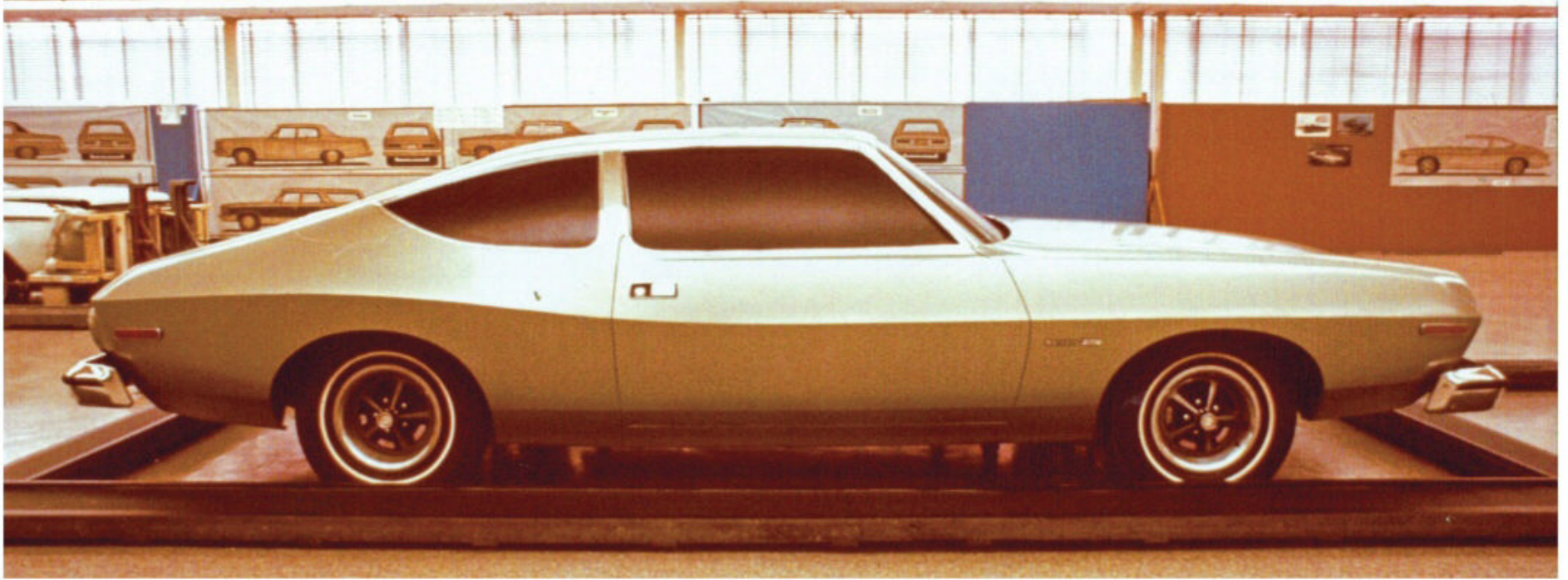
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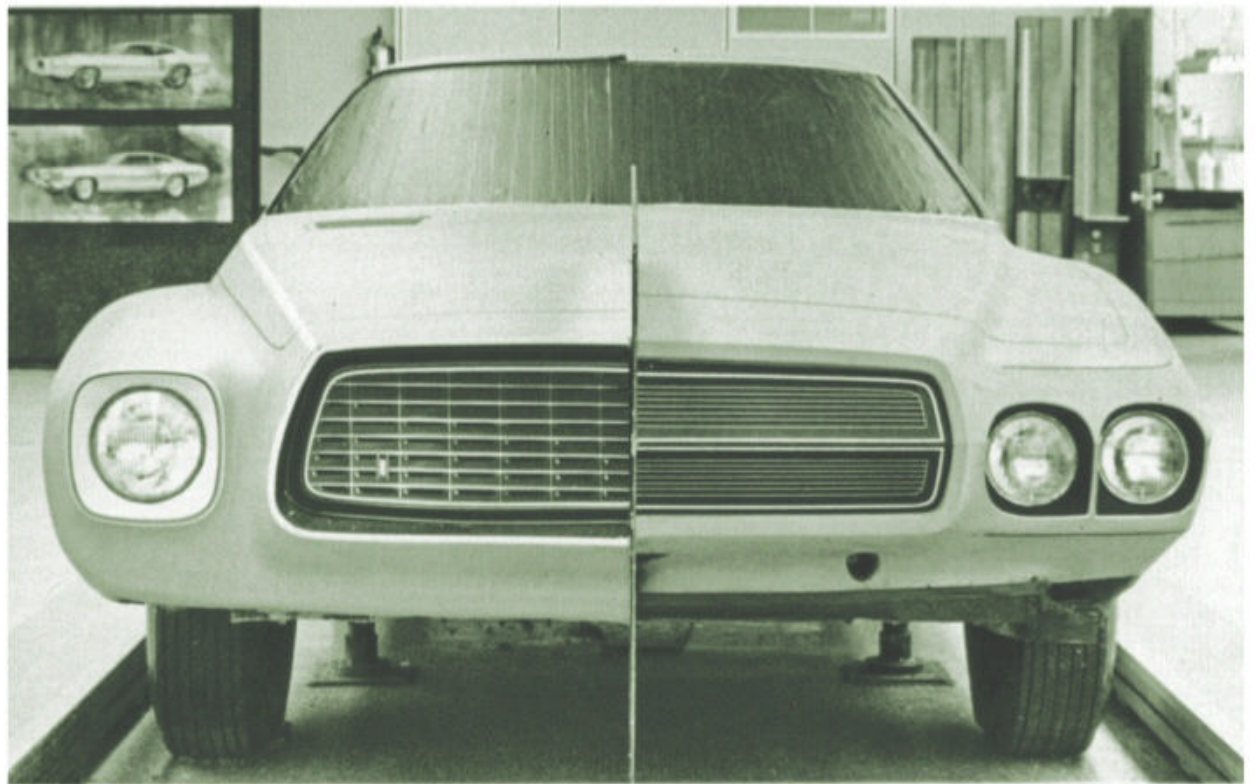
**After months of tweaking, the full-size clay model has evolved into a shape quite close to production.**

hardtop doors with frameless door glass, and a coupe-style roof with thick “B” pillars for extra strength in rollover accidents. What GM did was to combine much of the stylish good looks of a hardtop with the body strength required by new and upcoming safety regulations. Without knowing about the GM cars, American Motors stylists created their own rendition of Colonnade’ styling for the new Matador; quite successfully in fact.

Nixon’s team ran into a familiar problem: how to do a low, sleek coupe roofline while still maintaining adequate headroom. An early teardrop design was pleasing, but not exciting enough, and its thin “B” pillar made it look too much like a sedan. It was further developed with an elongated teardrop shape and doors with framed windows, but that just wasn’t appealing. Another idea that was considered was a thick “Targa Band”-style “B” pillar, but that made the car look “roof heavy.” The rear side window shape and the thickness and shape of the roof panel were the two areas that caused the most grief, but eventually the right shape was achieved. The teardrop rear window ended up being large and its tail terminated with a slightly upturned end. The “B” pillar was of medium width, and nicely integrated, with the rear section of the door panel blending in smoothly.

A squarish frontal design was originally investigated, with square tunneled fenders and headlamps set in square bright surrounds. It was very stylish, but perhaps a bit too much like what everyone else was doing, so a different approach was tried. Fender shapes were rounded off, with deeply tunneled headlamps created to add visual interest. In this, AMC was ahead of Chrysler, which would debut a similar look on the 1975 Cordoba. Out back the Matador’s roof blended in perfectly with the decklid, terminated with a slightly upturned end.

In many of the sketches, as well as the early clay models, the coupe’s



**Two ideas for front-end styling, neither of which made it into production.**

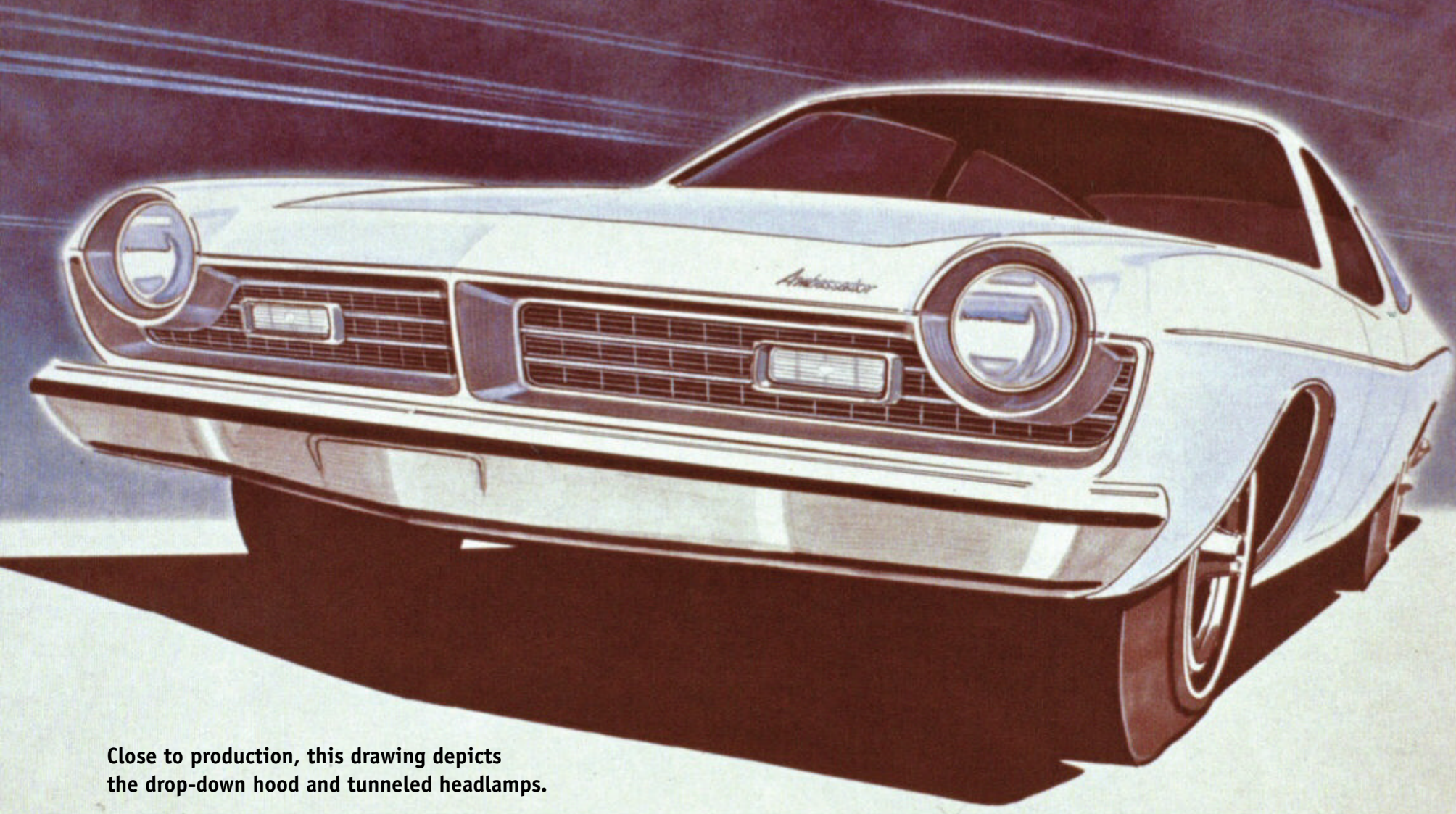


**This front-end proposal was created to maximize the look of width. Note one side has dual headlamps, the other side a single headlamp plus a running lamp.**

body sides featured thick, prominently sculpted lines, but in the final design Nixon, who preferred clean styling with-

out added-on gingerbread, got rid of all the gimcracks and gewgaw’s in favor of a pure, smooth appearance.





Close to production, this drawing depicts the drop-down hood and tunneled headlamps.



This is essentially the production model in clay form. Notice the covered-up model in the background — we'd love to know what that was.

different buyers. Base Matadors had fabric seat trim as standard, with vinyl optional, while sporty "X" models got standard vinyl. Upscale Brougham models were given standard plush fabric. A bench seat was standard, with individual reclining seats or buckets available at extra cost.

The big news was the optional Oleg Cassini package, designed by AMC stylists in collaboration with the famed fashion designer. Gorgeous individual reclining seats covered in a rich black nylon fabric with copper buttons and the Cassini crest on the head rests, a copper accented instrument panel and steering wheel, "Oleg Cassini" script on the glovebox door, vinyl roof, a copper-accented grille, scuff moldings, and custom wheel covers made this a very special car.

Standard equipment on base models was typical for the era; six-cylinder engine, three-speed column-shift manual transmission, full wheelcovers, and power nothing. However, AMC did include an "Extra-Quiet" insulation package as standard, along with front disc brakes, front sway bar, full carpeting, and better standard interior trim than most base intermediates got back then.

The Matador "X" coupe came nicely equipped, with slot-style wheels, big F70-14 raised white-letter tires, sports steering wheel, full-length rally stripes that wrapped around the rear deck, black-out grille, 304-cu.in. V-8 engine, and automatic transmission.

Brougham models got bright moldings for the wheel lips and rocker panels,



Nixon's unique "freestanding bumpers" used a flexible rubber form to dress-up the bumper brackets.

Freestanding bumpers were a huge innovation. Rather than utilizing thick filler panels to bridge the gap between the body and the new Federal-mandated safety bumpers, Nixon left that space clear, covering only the bumper brackets with flexible casings. It was a brilliant move, a clean, honest look.

While the exterior design work was ongoing, the Interior Design studio, under the talented Vince Geraci, was hard at work creating an all-new interior worthy of the beautiful exterior. Members of the interior staff included the exceptionally talented team of Susan Tassi, Jim Pappas, Bill St. Claire, and Bob Monacelli.

What Geraci's team was charged with creating was a suite of interiors aimed at





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AMC asked Oleg Cassini to create a new car interior from a fashion point of view. He created the interior for the Cassini Matador, America's sportiest new mid-size car. A limited edition coupe. Elegantly outfitted with plush black upholstery and accents of copper everywhere. The 24 oz. ultra-deep carpeting is copper colored, as are the dial clusters, hood stripe, rub rail inserts and grille. Even the wheel covers are accented copper. As a finishing touch, Mr. Cassini has placed his family crest on the car. And AMC has given Matador the exclusive Buyer Protection Plan. We invite you to examine this beautiful creation. **AMC MATADOR**

The Oleg Cassini Matador coupe, seen here with the man himself, was elegant, stylish, and unique. These models are highly prized today.

**AMC MATADOR**

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The newest midsize model for 1974, the Matador coupe was an exciting new entry for AMC and won many converts to the brand.

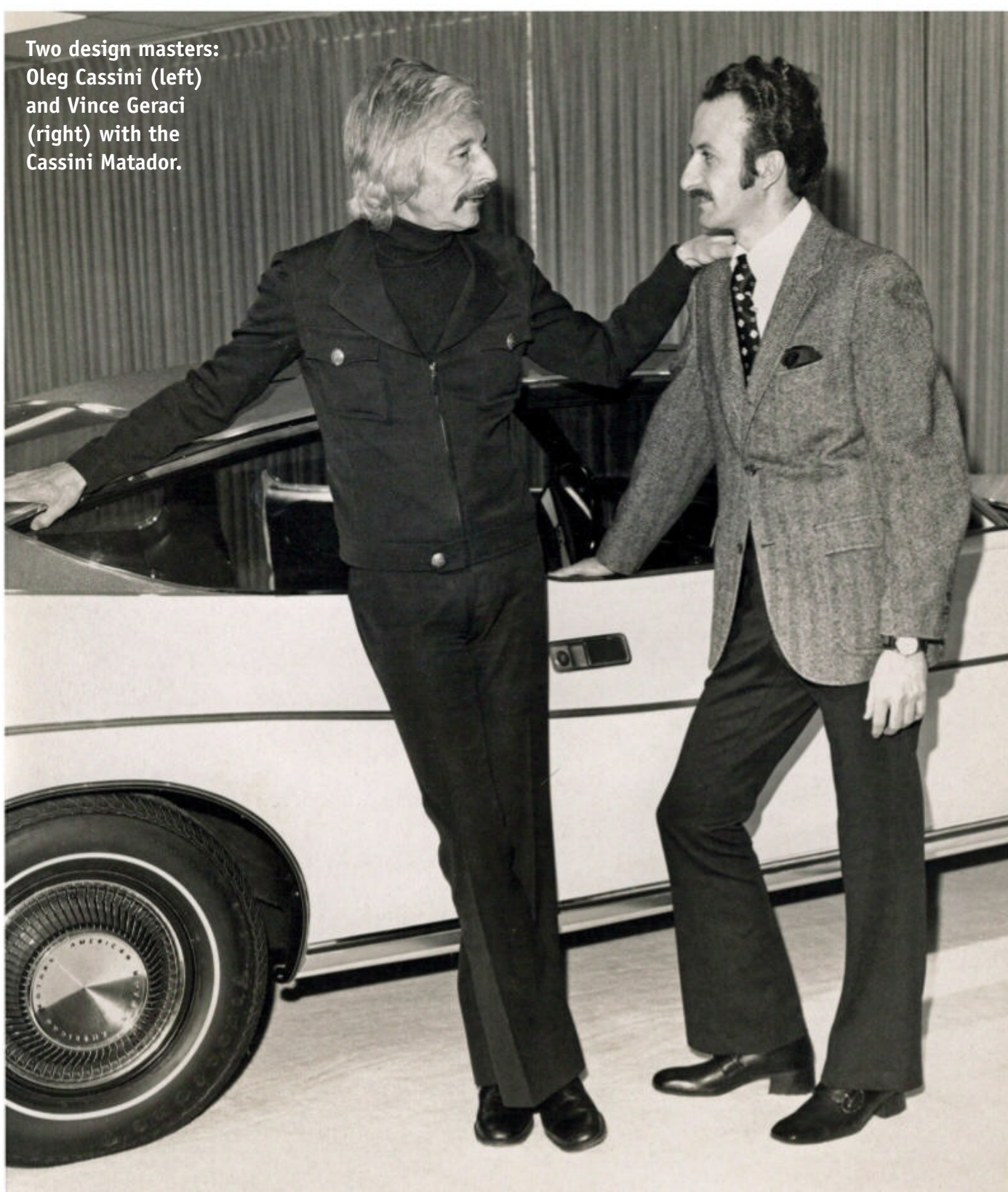
full wheel covers, custom door panels and seat trim, and a custom two-spoke steering wheel with woodgrain accents.

The base engine was AMC's workhorse 100-hp 232-cu.in. straight-six, with optional 258-cu.in. 110-hp six-cylinder, except on "X" models that got the 304-cu.in. V-8 as standard—this engine cost extra on the other coupes. Optionally available on all were two 360-cu.in. V-8s—a 175-hp two-barrel version and a 195-hp four-barrel, or AMC's well-regarded 401-cu.in. V-8 with 235 hp and 335 lb-ft of torque. The automatic transmission was a Chrysler three-speed TorqueFlite, offered with column or floor shifter.

Base price for the coupe was \$2,996, Brougham models were \$3,149, but the Matador "X" was tagged at \$3,599, reflecting its high level of standard equipment. The new car won wide acclaim. *Car and Driver* called it "1974's Best-Styled Car."

It sold well too, for a while, with Matador sales up about 50 percent for the 1974 model year. Unfortunately, in late 1974 the economy began to falter, and car sales began to tumble. Matador sales dropped about 20 percent for 1975 then dropped further as the economy headed downward.

By the time industry sales finally began to turn around, the Matador coupe was old news. That was too bad; many feel it was the most exciting AMC car of the decade. 🐞

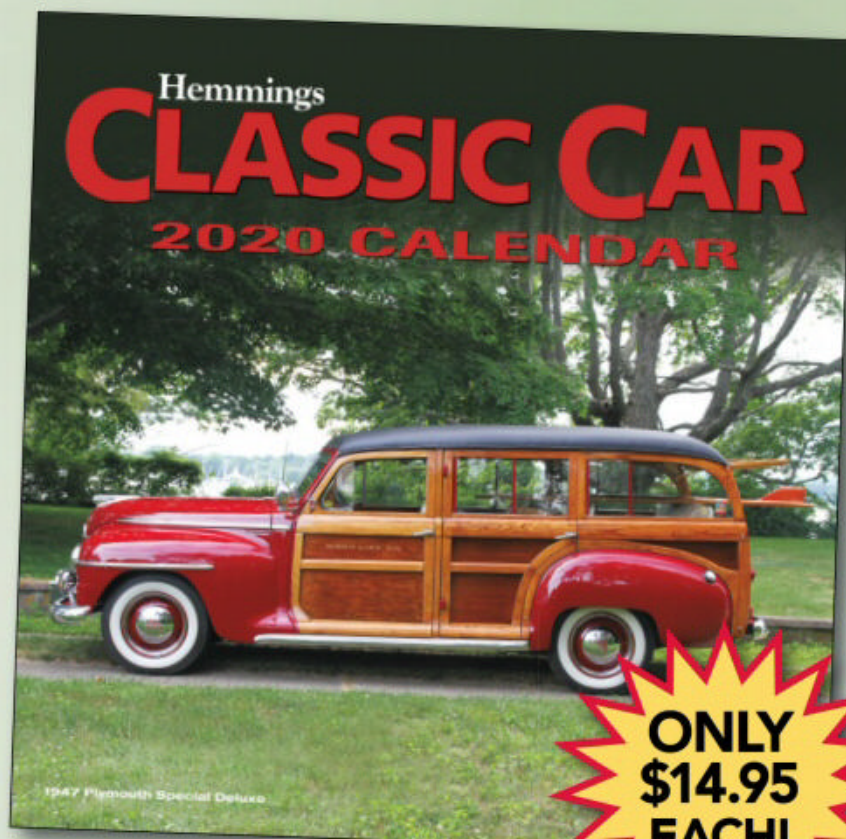




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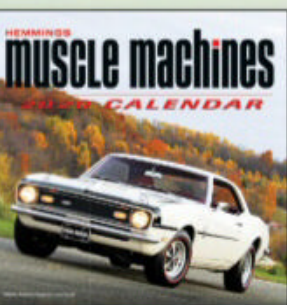
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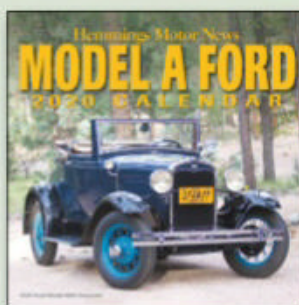


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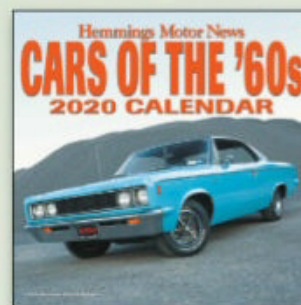
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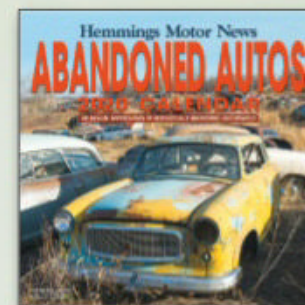
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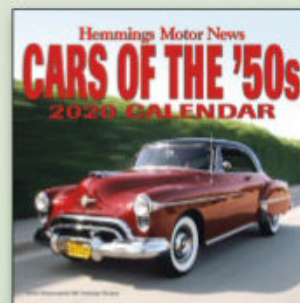


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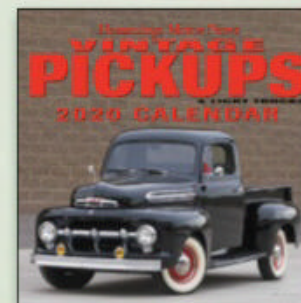


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# Houses That T Built

## *Ford's first distributed production effort*

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**T**hese days, the automobile company that operates out of just one assembly plant is rare. A century ago, however, it was commonplace, and like many other automobile manufacturing innovations, the practice of operating multiple plants simultaneously derived from the popularity of the Ford Model T.

Ford Motor Company, however, didn't just open one or two assembly plants here or there to handle the increased demand for the T. Instead, in the years before Peter E. Martin helped develop the moving assembly line for Ford, the company opened as many as 30 plants across the continent to churn out Ts like there was no tomorrow.

While a few "branch assembly plants" operated here and there, building up cars from knockdown kits (located in Buffalo, Kansas City, Long Island City, and Minneapolis), the initiative to build a network of assembly plants began in

December 1911, when Ford's board of directors sent James Couzens to California in "the interest of establishing Branch Houses, Warehouses, or to make other arrangements for the handling of our business as may seem necessary." Rather than follow their exact orders, Couzens came back with the suggestion to build smaller factories across the country that would assemble Model Ts from parts supplied by Ford's foundries and stamping operations in Highland Park, thus saving Ford from the expense of shipping completed Model Ts all over the country. Couzens even went ahead and bought four properties (in Seattle; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco; and Los Angeles) figuring the board would agree to his suggestion.

While Albert Kahn designed the aforementioned Highland Park and, later, the River Rouge plant for Ford, the company turned to Seattle-based architect John Graham to design its Model T assembly plants, all in more or less the same multi-

story, factory-slash-showroom pattern. Parts get delivered to the upper floors, usually via rail and a crane system, and down to the ground floor rolls a completed Ford Model T, either for sale in the assembly plant's showroom or for distribution to regional dealerships.

Construction of the assembly plants began in 1912 and lasted only until 1915 or so, when the assembly line made the multi-story format impractical. But in that period, annual Model T production skyrocketed: Year-over-year production increased by about 80 percent during the Model T's first few years, then jumped to 125 percent in 1912 and 140 percent in 1913. By comparison, the rate of production increases for Ford slowed to 46 percent in 1914 and seven percent in 1915 (the first two years of Model T assembly line production), indicating that widescale distribution perhaps had more of an impact on Ford's ability to meet demand and thus on the Model T's popularity than the moving assembly line.

The company even noted as much in a 1915 booklet that, in part, discussed the Model T assembly plants:

"This great output would be impossible, were it not for the Ford Assembling Plants and Branch Houses, twenty-eight in number, located in the principal cities of the United States. To these assembling plants are shipped parts for Ford cars in carload lots, and the cars are assembled at the different plants and supplied direct to dealers in the surrounding territory. While the factory at Detroit is able to average 1,200 cars per day of eight hours, the assistance of the assembling plants makes possible the attainment of a daily average of approximately 2,000 cars.

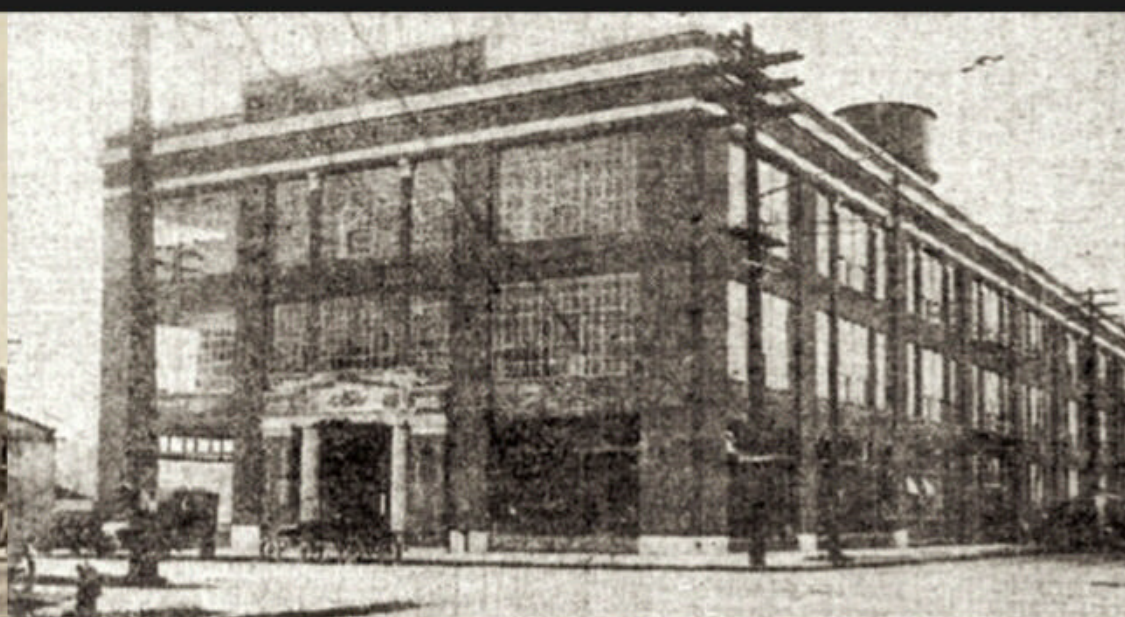
"All this intricate organization and investment of funds is designed to accomplish two objects. First, the system makes it possible to ship parts from the main factory to definite points for assembly, obtaining a more rapid and more economic distribution. Second, the location of the assembling plants aids in giving prompt, reliable and economical service to Ford owners, besides very greatly reducing the freight costs for delivery of cars, etc. The strategic location of the assembling plants makes for a handy distribution of parts and supplies, and there are no vexatious delays for the owner of a Ford car while a part is forwarded from the home factory."

Yet, even though these Model T assembly plants were so instrumental to Ford's success (and, by providing war ma-





Seattle-based architect John Graham designed dozens of assembly plants for Ford's Model T across the country during the early to mid-Teens. From top left: Atlanta, built 1914 to 1915; Cambridge, Massachusetts, built 1913; Cleveland, built 1915; Columbus, Ohio, built 1913 to 1914; Dallas, built 1913 to 1914; Des Moines, unknown build date; Fargo, North Dakota, built 1915; Houston, built 1913 to 1914; Louisville, Kentucky, unknown build date; Pittsburgh, built 1915; Portland, Oregon, built 1914; Seattle, built 1912 or 1913; St. Louis, built 1914; and Winnipeg, built 1915.







teriel, to the country's success during both World Wars), they've all been cast aside by the carmaker in the century-plus since their construction, which means there's been no real effort to catalog them until now. We've made an effort to not only list each of the Model T assembly plants built under Graham's oversight, but also to determine their exact locations, how long Ford used them, and what's happened to them since. So, in alphabetical order of the cities in which they were built:

#### **ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

699 Ponce de Leon Avenue (formerly 465 Ponce de Leon Avenue); built 1914 to 1915, assembly started March 1915, assembly relocated to Hapeville and building sold June 1942; added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 and redeveloped into apartments and retail shops.

#### **BUFFALO, NEW YORK**

2495 Main Street; built 1915, assembly started December 1915, assembly relocated to Fuhrman Boulevard plant and building sold 1931; redeveloped into the Tri-Main Center.

#### **CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS**

640 Memorial Drive; built 1913, assembly started April 1914, assembly relocated to

Somerville December 1926; renovated, currently home to Boston Biomedical.

#### **CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**

222 North Tryon Street, later 210 East Sixth Street; built 1914 and 1916, assembly relocated to Statesville Avenue plant in 1924; both locations demolished.

#### **CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

3915 Wabash Avenue; built 1914, assembly relocated to Torrance Avenue plant 1924, further history and current use unknown.

#### **CINCINNATI, OHIO**

660 Lincoln Avenue; assembly started July 1915, assembly ended 1938; added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989, renovated 2002, currently owned by Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

#### **CLEVELAND, OHIO**

11610 Euclid Avenue; built 1915, assembly ended March 1932, building given to federal government circa 1941; added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, renovated, currently home to Cleveland Institute of Art.

#### **COLUMBUS, OHIO**

Cleveland Avenue and I-670; built 1913 to 1914, assembly ended March 1932, closed 1939; until February 2019 used as a bakery for Kroger.

#### **DALLAS, TEXAS**

2700 Canton Street (formerly 2800 Williams Street); built 1913 to 1914, assembly started July 1914, assembly relocated to East Grand Avenue plant 1925, building sold in 1942; redeveloped 1997 into loft-style apartments.

#### **DENVER, COLORADO**

920 S. Broadway; built 1914, assembly ended 1933, sold sometime prior to 1945; redeveloped sometime prior to 2009 for use as a data center.

#### **DES MOINES, IOWA**

1800 Grand Avenue; planned 1916, assembly started April 1920, assembly ended December 1932, sold 1943; renovated 1980s into Des Moines School District's technical high school and central campus. (Even though it was built after Graham's work with Ford seemed to end, this appears more like Graham's plants than Kahn's.)

#### **DETROIT, MICHIGAN**

7310 Woodward Avenue (formerly 1550 Woodward Avenue); built 1908, expanded 1913, assembly ended 1919; currently commercial use. (Sources note that Albert Kahn designed this one; given the dates of construction and expansion, Graham may or may not have had a hand in the latter process.)

#### **FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA**

505 North Broadway Drive; built 1915, assembly ended 1917, sold 1956; renovated into multi-use commercial 2006

#### **FORT WORTH, TEXAS**

Data unknown; reportedly a short-lived expansion for the Dallas plant.

#### **HOUSTON, TEXAS**

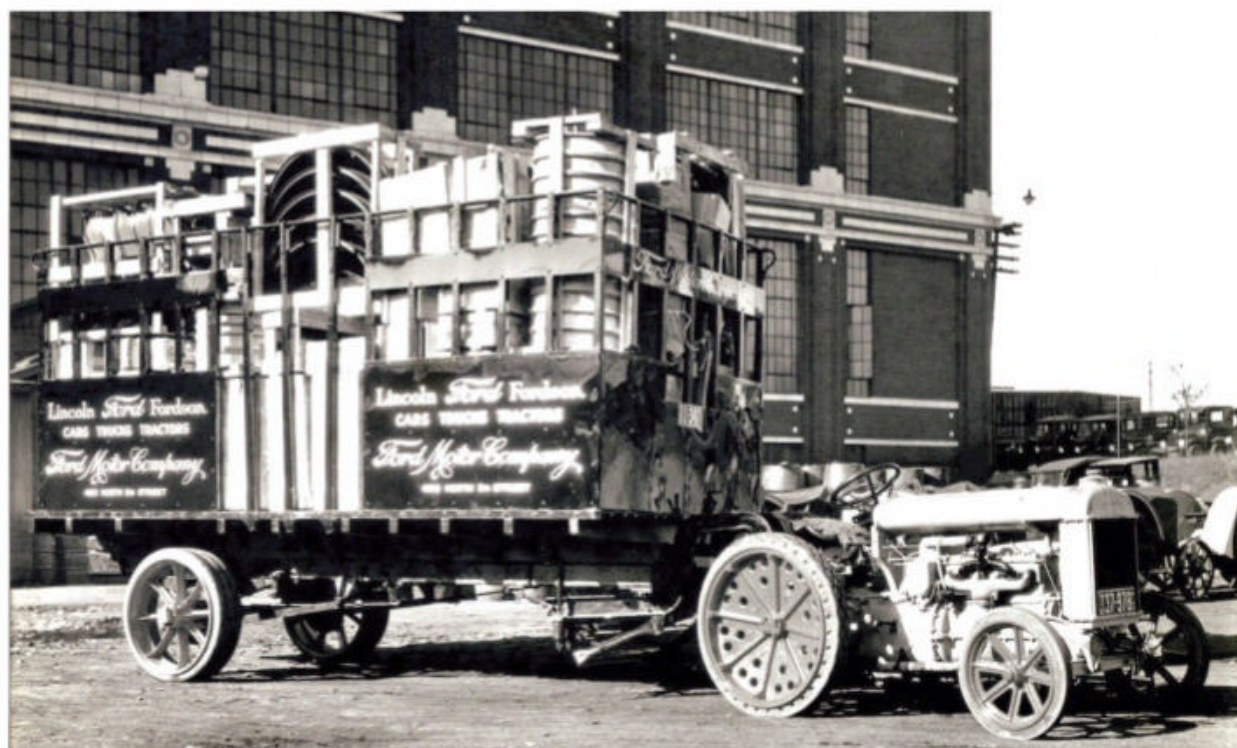
3900 Harrisburg Road; built 1913 to 1914, assembly started August 1914, assembly ended November 1932, sold circa 1942; most recently occupied by Atlantic Coffee Solutions.

#### **INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**

East Washington and North Oriental streets; built 1914, assembly ended December 1932, sold circa 1942; currently under mixed-use redevelopment.

#### **KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

1025 Winchester Avenue; built 1909







to 1911, assembly began 1912, closed 1956; remains industrial use. (First branch assembly plant outside of Detroit; unsure whether Graham designed. Location of first UAW strike against Ford, also where the 20 millionth Ford vehicle was assembled.)

#### **LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK**

Honeywell and Northern Boulevard (formerly 564 Jackson Avenue); built prior to 1914, assembly relocated to Kearney (New Jersey) plant 1917; currently The Center Building.

#### **LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

2060 East 7th; built 1913, assembly began February 1914, expanded 1923, assembly relocated to Long Beach plant May 1930; currently under mixed-use development.

#### **LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**

2400 South Third Street; assembly started January 1916, assembly relocated to Southwestern Parkway plant February 1925; renovated in 2008 into loft-style apartments.

#### **MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE**

495 Union Avenue; built 1913, assembly relocated to Riverside Drive plant November 1924, building sold 1932; building demolished circa 1975.

#### **MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**

2185 North Prospect Avenue; assembly started April 1916, assembly ended November 1932; currently mixed-use development housing the Peck School of Arts.

#### **MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

420 North 5th Street; built 1913 to 1914, assembly started December 1914, assembly relocated to new St. Paul plant May 1925, building sold circa 1945; currently home to the Ford Center. Reportedly the tallest building ever constructed for the purpose of building automobiles.

#### **OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA**

900 West Main Street; assembly started May 1916, assembly ended November 1932, sold 1968; redeveloped into the 21st Century Museum Hotel.

#### **OMAHA, NEBRASKA**

Cuming and 16th streets; assembly started August 1916, assembly ended November

1932, sold 1955; added to National Register of Historic Places in 2004, renovated into luxury apartments.

#### **PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

2700 North Broad Street; built 1914, assembly started November 1914, assembly relocated to new Chester plant and building sold June 1927; currently vacant and for sale.

#### **PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

Baum Boulevard and Morewood Avenue; built 1915, assembly began March 1915, assembly ended November 1932, sold 1953; added to National Register of Historic Places in 2018, currently under redevelopment into a medical center.

#### **PORTLAND, OREGON**

2505 SE 11th Avenue; built 1914, assembly started February 1914, assembly ended 1932; redeveloped into mixed-use commercial.

#### **SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

2905 21st Street; built 1914, assembly relocated to Richmond plant June 1931; demolished following the Loma Prieta earthquake, now the site of an elementary school.

#### **SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

Valley Street and Fairview Avenue; built 1912 or 1913, assembly started March 1914, assembly relocated to Marginal

Way plant January 1932; redeveloped circa 1998 into storage.

#### **ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

4100 Forest Park Avenue; built 1914, assembly started September 1914, expanded 1916, assembly ended and building transferred to federal government 1942; added to National Register of Historic Places in 2001, redeveloped circa 2006 into mixed-use then circa 2015 into loft-style apartments.

#### **ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA**

117 University Avenue West; built 1913 to 1914, assembly ended and building sold by 1920, assembly transferred to Mississippi River plant 1925; state of Minnesota purchased in 1952 and has since renovated as the Ford Office Building.

Of note, while Albert Kahn seems to have erroneously been credited with the design of some of the above (including Buffalo, Omaha, and St. Louis), he did indeed design some Model T-era factories for Ford (such as Chicago's Torrance Avenue, the Jacksonville, Florida, and New Orleans, Louisiana factories), though those came later, in the early 1920s. If you have any additions or corrections to the list, let us know and we'll edit where appropriate. 🐞





# Grocery Getter

*A 1954 GMC Suburban retired from food delivery to become a show-stopper*

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

**A**fter WWII, a group of hardworking Italian-Americans founded a one-room grocery store in Prescott, Arizona. During the postwar boom this little enterprise, The Hassayampa Market, prospered, expanded, and became a local institution until it closed in 1979.

If you were hosting a dinner party, for instance, the family-owned store would gladly cater a complete custom menu, beverages included. In the days before bank cards, you could buy your groceries from the market on credit. If hauling home your own goods wasn't possible, no problem; you could have groceries delivered.

In fact, had you placed your order with the Hassayampa Market in the 1950s, this very 1954 GMC Suburban would've rolled up to your door, loaded with locally raised meat, dairy products, and more. The truck's tough, economical 248-cu.in. GMC six-cylinder engine and Hydra-Matic transmission were the perfect pairing for around-town deliveries.

When current owners Don and Emma Gilbert discovered the Suburban in May of 1995, it had been retired from the grocery business for years. The truck was located in nearby Mesa, Arizona, rust-free and original, but a little beat up—plus it needed a mechanical overhaul. One of the problems that the Gilberts noticed, however, was that during its stint as a delivery vehicle the passenger seats had gone missing. "Those seats are really hard to find," Don said. "We didn't buy the truck at first, because we wanted to make sure we could locate a set."

At the time, the Gilberts were in the business of selling early GMC and Chevrolet truck parts so they had connections. A call to a friend in Nebraska yielded the correct seats and the Gilberts bought them. With seats in hand, they then returned to Mesa to purchase the Suburban.

The next challenge was preparing the truck for a show that the couple enjoyed attending: the Chevy/GMC Truckin' Nationals in Paso Robles, California. In less than two months, the Gilberts completed a thorough body-on restoration that included: straightening the GMC's considerable body panels, changing the truck's color from blue to the current Sahara Tan and Cascade White, rebuilding the engine, and more. "My wife and I worked day and night for 42 days," Don said. "We were able to complete it in time and won first place in our class."

Unfortunately, on the way home, the Suburban's Hydra-Matic gave out in Bakersfield, so the Gilberts returned home with Don's uncle—who'd attended the nationals with his 1953 Chevrolet truck—and drove back to fetch the 'burb with their truck and trailer.

Today, the GMC is rock-solid reliable and boasts many desirable options and accessories including: rear "barn" doors, turn signals, a Fulton sunvisor, a hood ornament, running board







This 1954 GMC Suburban boasts a two-tone paint scheme in Sahara Tan and Cascade White, as well as an accessory sunvisor, hood ornament, heater, radio, and clock. You won't find "park" on a Hydra-Matic indicator (above), just a choice of three ranges, neutral, and reverse.



step plates, a heater, and an AM radio that's been converted to also receive FM stations.

GMC's truck-based wagon first hit the market in 1937, two years after the arrival of the Chevrolet Suburban. Up until then, most station wagons were car-based with bodies made partially of wood, capped with canvas-covered tops. Suburbans ushered in the age of the truck-based people mover with all-steel bodies mounted on rugged commercial-grade chassis. The one oddity of the original 'burb's design was that it was available as a two-door only. That didn't change until 1967 when a third door was introduced, giving the truck two doors on the passenger's side and one on the driver's. With the 1973-model-year redesign, a fourth door was added giving it two doors on each side.

Unlike today, in the pre- and postwar years, GMC light trucks didn't share engines with Chevrolets: in 1936, GMC used the 85-horsepower, 213-cu.in. Oldsmobile L-head straight-six; in 1937, the Oldsmobile engine displaced 230 cubic inches; and in 1938, GMC light-duty rigs were powered by the 223-cu.in. Pontiac L-head straight-six.

For 1939, GMC rolled out its AC series trucks ranging from the AC 100 ½-ton to the Super Duty AC 890 with a 50,000-pound gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR). Pontiac and Oldsmobile engines were replaced by GMC engines that year: ½-tons were powered by the GMC 228-cu.in. straight-six with overhead valves and four main bearings, while medium-duty trucks were powered by the 228's big brother, the 248. These were ruggedly built engines designed for commercial use with insert bearings and full-pressure oiling. (By 1954, the 248 was the base engine in ½-tons and could be paired with a three-speed, a Muncie SM420 synchromesh four-speed, or Hydra-Matic.)

In the summer of 1947, GMC rolled out its all-new trucks that shared exterior body panels with Chevrolet's Advance Design trucks. Mechanically these weren't a radical departure from their predecessors, but GM's styling department had imbued the new trucks with cues drawn from the General's popular passenger cars. For instance, the headlamps were incorporated into the wide front fenders, the windshield was fixed in place, and the wipers were placed on the cowl. The first of this series' trucks boasted grilles similar in style to Pontiac and Chevrolet passenger cars, with gently curving horizontal bows.

The new GMCs were designed with operator comfort in mind, too. The cockpit was wider, with more head and leg room, plus it could accommodate three people across. There were scoop-type ventilators on the top of the cowl to let some fresh air in, though a heater/defroster was still optional. Thicker dash and floor mats with better insulation than on previous trucks helped keep noise down, and the dash had provisions for a pushbutton radio and speaker.

These new Suburbans also had removable seats for easy conversion from people hauler to freight mover. In addition, there was a flexible seat arrangement that could allow for different configurations in order to accommodate passengers and cargo. The standard configuration was three passengers up front, two in the middle, and three in the rear.

GM's Hydra-Matic automatic made its debut in GMC light trucks in 1953 but, by then, the transmission had been battle tested in American M5 and M24 tanks during WWII. By 1950, GMC M135 2½-ton "deuce and a half" military trucks were using Hydra-Matics.

In commercial trucks, the benefits of an automatic transmission were numerous: drivers didn't have to learn to operate a manual transmission, clutch wear due to driver abuse was eliminated, and operator fatigue was reduced.

The game-changing Hydra-Matic used a fluid coupling (not a torque converter) and two planetary gear clusters to get the vehicle moving. There were four forward speeds on tap while reverse was handled by a separate planetary unit. Speed changes were accomplished by alternating the front and rear planetary gear clusters between a slower reduction mode and a faster direct-drive mode.

This all had to happen free of driver input, so the transmission's clutches and bands had to alternately apply and release themselves at precise times in order to allow the planetary units to change modes, which was accomplished with hydraulic fluid pressure.

The driver could use the column-mounted range selector to select from 1-4 (for all four forward speeds), 1-3, or 1-2. There was no park as in later automatics, just the drive ranges, as well as neutral and reverse. The Hydra-Matic was long-lived at GM, and when these transmissions aren't worn out and everything is properly adjusted, they work well.

The Gilberts' Suburban is a rolling testament to a time when GMC built its own powerplants and customers relied on these well-built engines for light commercial work—like delivering groceries. According to Don, this old GMC can still get the job done: "The engine has plenty of power and you can really feel the transmission shifting," he said. "It's a little different but fun to drive." 🚚







For 1954, the GMC 248-cu.in. six was standard in 1/2-tons. This was a more robust engine than the Chevrolet six, designed with full-pressure oiling and insert bearings. The rear of this Suburban is accessed with barn-type doors. A lift door and tailgate were also available. Bullet taillights were an accessory.







# Desert Rose Dream

*Restoring a rare 1956 Chrysler New Yorker convertible quickly became an epic process—Part I*

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TOM ZITKUS

Regular readers of our sister publication, *Hemmings Muscle Machines*, may recall the restoration of Bob Green's 1971 Ford Torino GT convertible managed by Tom Zitkus—proprietor of TZ Restorations in New Ringgold, Pennsylvania. It was a compelling story that led straight back to Bob's days in high school and the launch of his monumental career, all recaptured—to a large degree—in the Ford's resurrection. It was also a project that almost never happened, as Tom preferred restoring Fifties cars. Bob had one such car: one of the mere 921 New Yorker convertibles Chrysler built for 1956, finished in a shade of Desert Rose. Yet Bob insisted that Tom start with the '71 Torino, which eventually led to a long list of projects in the years that followed.

That list included the Chrysler, which also had strong nostalgic ties to Bob's youth: He grew up in the back of his father's four-door sedan where he became enamored with Chrysler's Highway Hi-Fi record player and the radio's ability to change channels by itself, unaware of the foot switch manipulated by his father. The convertible now in Bob's possession had been purchased a few years prior in a useable but tired state. Tom had even given it a cursory examination, advising Bob to find a complete and rust-free parts car. Bob heeded the advice and did just that by purchasing a same-year St. Regis; the name given to the two-door hardtop within the New Yorker line.

According to Tom, "When I first looked at the New Yorker, 11 of the 14

body mounts were completely shot. So was the floorpan. The whole underside was riddled with corrosion, so I knew we were going to need a parts car. Bob purchased it about a year before we took delivery of the Chrysler, which meant that when we finally started the restoration in November 2007, we had everything in place."

The decision to obtain a parts car proved fortuitous in more ways than one nearly as soon as disassembly began. Optimistic views regarding the condition of the convertible's frame vanished, as did parts of the body, propelling the restoration into unbelievably epic territory. Let's follow the start of its transformation in this first installment.



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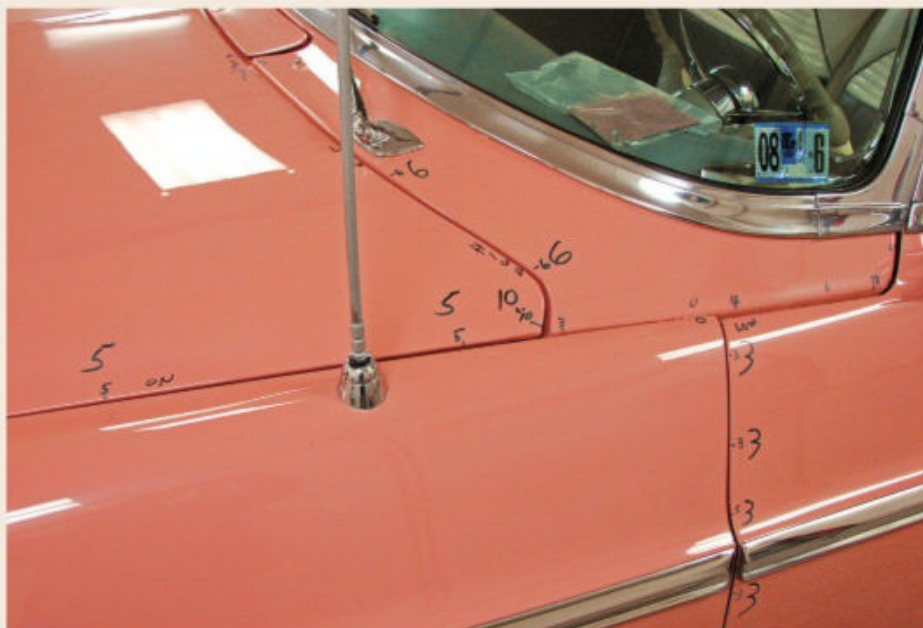


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Before a single bolt was removed from the car, every panel gap was measured in 1/32nd increments at key locations using custom-made gauges. Each was marked and then photographed. This tact would help determine where adjustments would be needed later.



It may look like a simple image showing innocuous wear on a section of the interior; however, the photo documents the Chrysler's two-tone upholstery pattern and piping, as well as the proper routing for the seat restraints within the framing.



Not to be overlooked was the configuration of the convertible top framings, weather seals, and top material. This type of imagery will allow the restorer to re-examine which pieces are painted and plated. Note that each of the top's bows are chrome plated.



Aside from demonstrating how the assembly line secured the bottom of the top to the body, this photo clearly shows rust has stained the mounting points. Just how much corrosion is hidden will be determined after the material is carefully removed.



The convertible's interior was removed first, allowing the team to determine the exact configuration of the power top operating system. Fortunately, the inner side structure wasn't corroded, nor was the system damaged beyond repair.



Concurrent to the disassembly of the convertible was the break down of a same-year New Yorker two-door hardtop parts car, which proved to be in far better condition. One can spot the differences in the hardtop and convertible interior structure design.





By their very design, convertibles are more susceptible to absorbing the elements versus their closed-top brethren. This is an example of what could be lurking behind a leather-shod door panel: paper insulation festooned with decades of water stains.



It may seem silly adding labels under factory-labelled auxiliary controls, but what are the odds of you remembering the exact position of each knob many months later during final reassembly? This simple step eliminates guesswork and saves time later.



Before removing the framework of the New Yorker's power front seat, this photo captured its condition and configuration. It was known that corrosion afflicted the floorpan to the point that panel seams had split open along the rocker panel.



This detail shows Chrysler's routing of the power top wiring through the interior's substantial crossmember welded on top of the floorpan. Replicating this attention to detail later will prevent the new wiring from being compromised during reassembly.

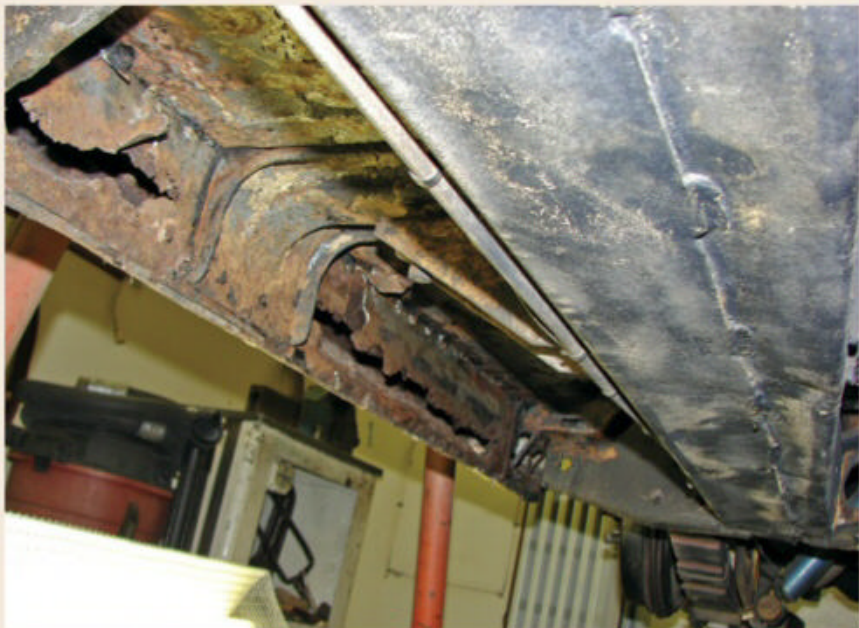


It's easy to completely remove the instrument panel and expose the wiring under the dash; however, it's more efficient to allow the panel to dangle while maintaining key connections until each of the wire leads are labelled.



Damage to the convertible top's rear mounting points turned out to be minimal. With the rest of the interior removed, you can see the recessed section on top of the left-rear inner wheel well that the factory provided to make clearance for the top when folded down.





The condition of the inner rocker panels was appalling. Originally made from two pieces of .045-inch sheetmetal welded together, the panels corroded with ease due to a lack of paint during initial assembly. The rockers are a critical structural element.



Whether a part is going to be replaced outright, restored, or cleaned and reused, it's good practice to label every part, regardless of material composition. Old weather seals can be compared against replacements for fit and finish before reassembly.



This was the state of disassembly of both the convertible and hardtop parts car by February 2008. The radiator core supports and engines were next to be removed, but a keen eye will observe a subtle difference in the forward cowl body mount position.



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The benefit of having a complete parts car at your disposal during a restoration is the duplicate, interchangeable mechanical components you have at the ready. In this case, the team picked the better of the water manifold/pumps to refurbish.



Although the coil spring has already been removed, this image documents the routing of hydraulic lines in relation to the front suspension. The upper and lower control arms would be cleaned and inspected for damage later while new lines were obtained.



Both bodies have been removed from their corresponding chassis, this being that of the convertible that is so corroded a screwdriver could easily pass through parts of it. The center X-member was unique to the convertible, so it was carefully removed.



Though the frame's center X-member was devoid of rot, the steel was festooned with substantial pitting and surface rust, both of which have been removed with a long day of power sanding using a combination of 40- and 80-grade paper.



The bottom of the hardtop frame only had dents caused by rocks and/or floor jacks. To pull the dents, washers were welded into the low points, which were then raked with a slide hammer; like pulling sheetmetal dents. Welds were ground smooth.



The only other difference between convertible and hardtop frames was the stiffening plates within the convertible's frame where the four corners of the central X-member were welded. Though it probably wasn't necessary, this would be replicated.





Each of the original plates was removed from the original convertible frame, and then used as templates to create new replacements to insert into the hardtop's frame. These simple plates added frame strength and reduced natural torsional stress.

How does one insert new plates into a frame without cutting it apart? He or she carefully crafts a simple notch into the top of the frame perfectly matching the thin profile of the plate. Factory holes in the side were designed to accept plate welds.



Due to advanced careful planning and fabrication work, the new plates slid home with relative ease, completing the otherwise hidden upgrade matching factory specifications. Any obtrusive welds, which sealed the plates within, were later sanded smooth.

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Before welding the X-member to the hardtop frame, it was important to level and load the unit under stress to prevent the entire structure from twisting. If a frame jig is not available, stacking ample weight at the furthest outreaches does the trick.



While the hardtop frame was modified to convertible form, its two-door body shell had been delivered to the now-defunct Redi-Strip facility for a dip in an acid tank to remove old paint, primer, and assorted grime. The result is this bare steel body.



Meanwhile, rot within the convertible was far more problematic than anticipated in several areas. To save shop space, the body is temporarily reunited with its damaged frame as disassembly took a further and dramatic step forward.



Almost the entire right side of the convertible is removed, including the wheelwell assembly, exposing the boxed fuel fill sleeve, as well as the door jamb structure that sits atop the back end of the rocker panel assembly.



Chrysler engineered its rocker panels to be a critical structural element. Floorpan sections and the body shell utilize the rockers as an added foundation. Due to the vast amount of rot, exposed here, it was almost impossible to simply swap rockers.



In early January 2009, the state of the convertible's disassembly leaves it looking like a short flatbed in the making. Phase two of the project, body reconstruction, was about to begin. Join us next month as we follow the extensive work that lay ahead.





#1

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# Bank Manager's Vehicle of Choice



## *Britain's 1949 P3-generation Rover 75 hid surprising technical advances*

BY MARK J. McCOURT AND JEFF KOCH • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT

**P**ostwar, Rover cars were a delicious dichotomy. On the outside, they were smartly conservative—nothing too weird or flashy. But underneath, there were always some significant technical advancements that belied the stolid upper-middle-class style. Before the war, Rovers were utterly contemporary in their design and engineering; after WWII ended and Britain's manufacturing base got going again, things got considerably more technically innovative.





The first of these really new Rovers (not just rehashed prewar models built to get the production lines moving again) was the short-lived P3 range of 1948-'49. The P3 generation consisted of two models—the four-cylinder 60, and the six-cylinder 75; the P3 designation simply meant that this generation of Rover sported the company's third chassis in the postwar era. Those four- and six-cylinder P3 cars would represent a stop-gap of sorts, blending old and new in packages aimed toward international markets in that "Export or Die" era. It's fitting that the traditional appearance of the flagship six-cylinder P3—the 75 Saloon—cloaked a suspension and drivetrain that would forecast Rover's future.

The company's prewar and 1945-'48 continuation models came in numerous sizes and strengths—four-cylinder 10 and 12, and six-cylinder 14, 16, and 20 models, those names representing their taxable horsepower figures. The 1948-'49 P3

offerings were vastly simplified, with the singular four- and six-cylinder lines respectively dubbed 60 and 75 after approximate real horsepower ratings. The engine was a clean-sheet postwar design, featuring an inclined cylinder head, with intake valves in the cylinder head, exhaust valves in the block itself, and a side-mounted double-roller-chain-driven camshaft. This required intake and exhaust manifolds to reside on opposite sides of the engine. Four-cylinder engines had three main bearings; sixes had four. Sixes also utilized a two-barrel down-draught carburetor, though a couple of factory-special hotties used a triple-throat carburetor.

The reduced model range, down to a single 110.5 inch chassis, was explained away by "the National need for economy," according to the brochure, thus gently pulling at the patriotic strings in a Briton's heart. Even so, there were advanced touches: Light metal alloys were used in valve covers, timing covers, and the oil pan.





The six-cylinder engine in our featured car, a 1949 model 75 owned by noted Rover collector Dirk Burrowes of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, features that unusual cast-iron F-head design. This straight-six displaces 2,103-cc (128-cu.in.), has a 7.25:1 compression ratio, and aspirates through a two-barrel Solex carburetor to make 72 hp at 4,000 rpm. Rover's design allowed for a nearly hemispherical combustion chamber, with the spark plug located in the center. (The four-cylinder 60, which shared its engine with the first Land Rovers, made 51 hp from its 1,595-cc/97-cu.in. displacement.) Both engines were exclusively mated to a floor-shifted four-speed manual with synchromesh on third and fourth gears, plus a freewheeling function to allow clutchless shifting on the move; the gearbox, and its freewheeling ability, were unchanged from the previous Rover model range.

As previously mentioned, this P3 sports other innovations that would be carried over into the modern-looking P4 75 of 1950, including an independent coil spring front suspension with an anti-roll bar, and a semi-elliptical leafspring rear. The

new box-section frame stopped short of the rear axle, the frame itself was all steel rather than the previous steel-over-ash construction Rover had enjoyed, and the rear leaf springs were attached directly to the body rather than the chassis. The result was increased rear-axle travel and a smoother ride.

Rover's first attempt at hydraulic-actuated brakes in the mid-1930s was a flop, so its engineers hedged their bets by designing a combination system that actuated hydraulic drums on the front wheels, and mechanical drums on the rear. "Those brakes are a nightmare," Dirk says with a laugh. "They work, but it's a challenge to get them adjusted correctly so the fronts do most of the work, as intended; they made some big improvements for the P4."

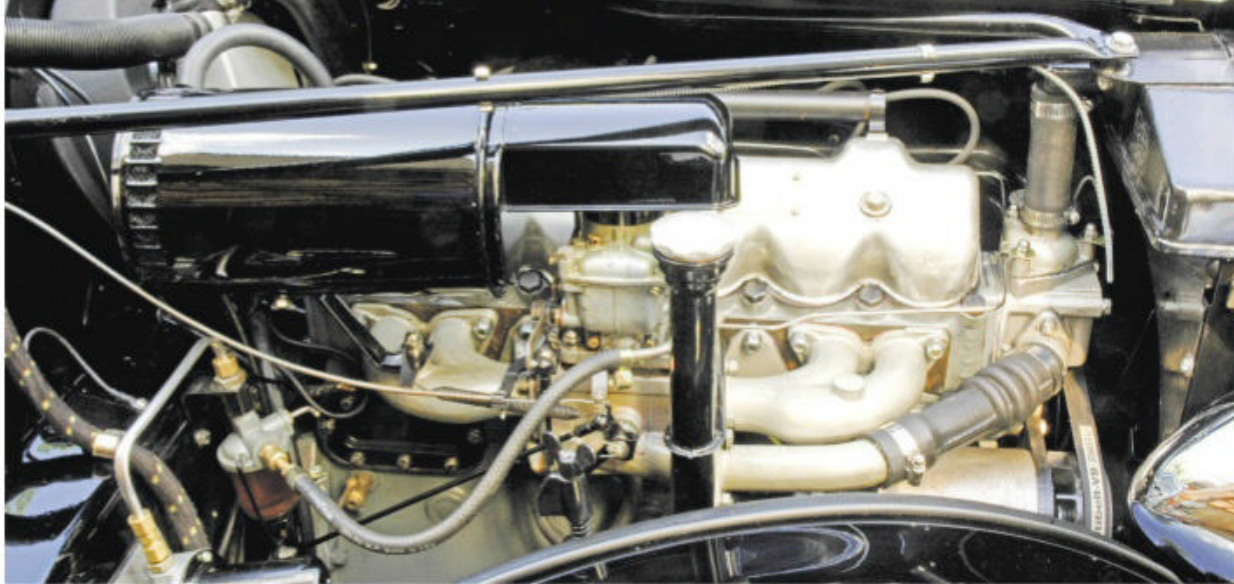
Though the P3 closely resembled previous Rovers, the body was largely new: only the fenders and hood were carried over. Although the body was similar in styling to the Rover 12 and 16, designer Gordon Bashford designed an entirely new body shell that had echoes of Rover's recent



Wood instrument panel and full instrumentation were part and parcel of the era; left-hand-drive models were part of the postwar European "Export or Die" mentality. Ventilation improvements promised 100 cubic feet of air per minute.







Rover's all-new postwar six displaced 2,103-cc (128-cu.in.), had a 7.25:1 compression ratio, and aspirates through a two-barrel Solex carburetor to make 72 hp at 4,000 rpm.



past, but though the 75 was half an inch wider outside than the 16 it replaced, it was 2.5 inches wider inside. Both the 60 and the 75 could be had in tall roof, "six-light" (three windows per side) Saloon, or lower roof, "four-light" (two windows per side) Sports Saloon body styles. All doors were rear-hinged "coach doors" (what we call suicide doors). Five colors—black, green, grey, maroon, and "Sundown" were available, each with specific contrasting striping and interior colors.

"While the P3 looks similar to the prewar body design," said Dirk, "there were no interchangeable body parts. This became a holdover product because there were a number of things Rover wanted to do, but couldn't execute when they brought the P3 to market—it was still a test platform for what became the 1950 P4. In the P3, they introduced the Inlet-Over-Exhaust engine, the hydraulic-mechanical braking system, and the independent front suspension, and they revised the rear spring mounts to add room for the passengers and in the boot."

The result, wrote *Autocar* magazine's road tester in the February 4, 1949, issue, was quite something: "Briefly this satisfying car of the highest quality does everything with a silky smoothness, a soothing quietness, and also in about the highest degree of riding comfort in front and back seats yet known, and with a precision and lightness of control which makes a driver feel on top of his form and which renders every mile a delight whether in town or out on the open road...Throughout, there is that suggestion of top mechanical quality, exclusive to a tiny fraction of cars, which eludes detailed description."

"One of Britain's Finest Cars—Now Made Finer," humbly bragged the cover of the brochure. Rover's pricing lived up to the brochure's tagline: £1,080 pounds for the 60 and £1,106 pounds for the 75. Buyers quickly saw that you got a lot more

car for just £26 pounds in the 75, and it was overwhelmingly the more popular of the two models: 1,274 of the 60 and 7,837 of the 75 models were built before being replaced by the P4 late in 1949. Those production numbers seem low, even for a war-torn country trying to get its manufacturing base back on line. But the P3 was only ever meant to be a stopgap measure, its short production run planned to give Rover's engineers time to put the finishing touches on the replacement 75, what would be known as the P4 (known also as "Cyclops," thanks to its single extra headlight mounted low in the grille). Indeed, the P4 launched only as a 75; four-cylinder engines were then reserved exclusively for Land Rover use.

"The majority of P3s were exported, with left-hand-drive examples coming to the U.S. and Canada," Dirk continues. "And a lot of early Land Rovers came over here on the backs of the P3 and P4 Cyclops, not the other way around, as many think. A lot was happening at Rover in the late 1940s—with limited resources, they moved from the bombed-out Coventry plant to their shadow factory in Solihull, developed and built the P3 and Land Rover, and developed the P4. Rover did all this without backing off the quality it had been famous for in the 1930s, even though this was a different time and on a different budget. While the P3 retained that old-world body style, it was among the most eclectic and modern of all running board cars. It's a lot of fun."

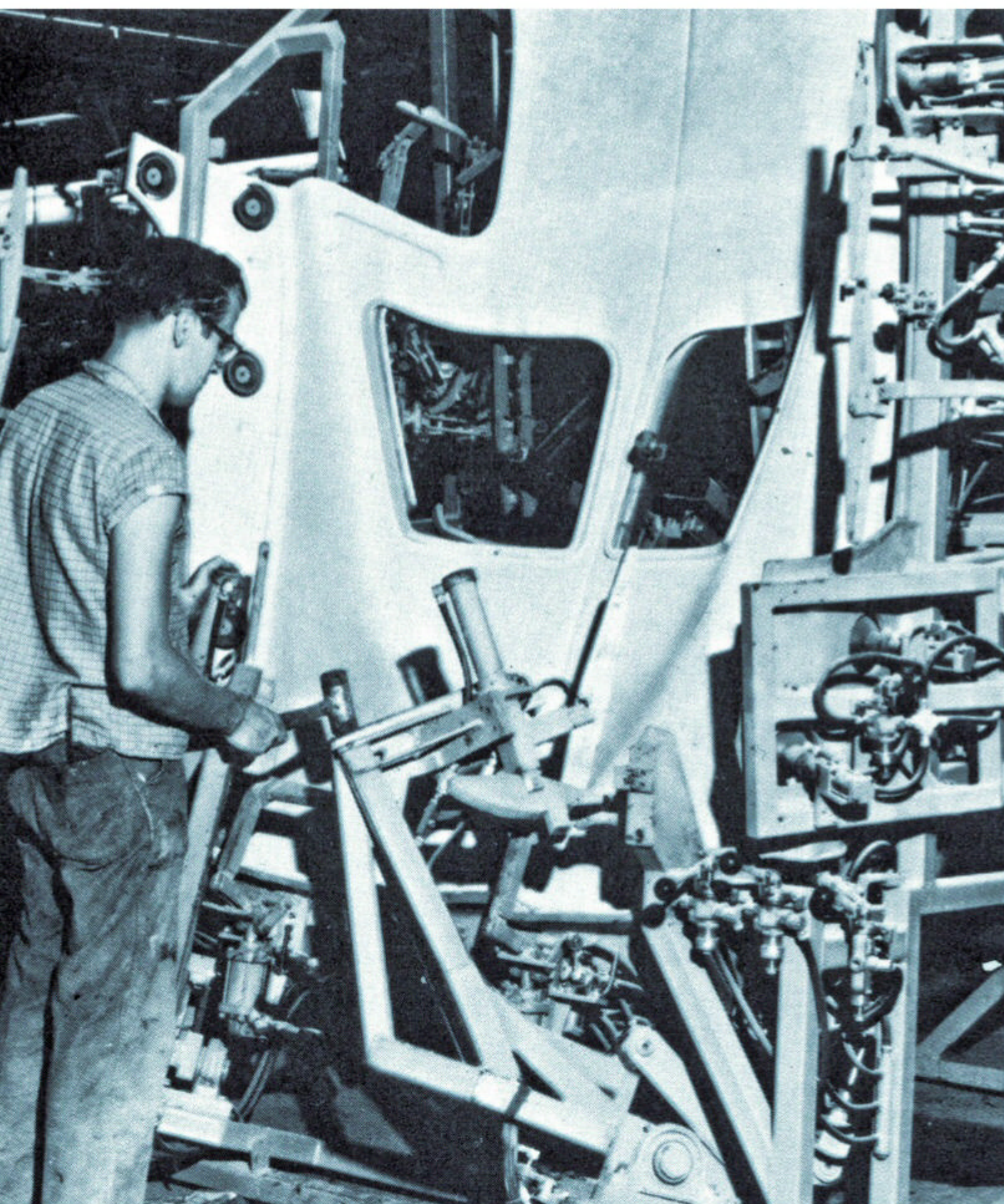
Later, Rover sedans (or saloons, if you prefer) would have remarkable technical features on their own—not many production sedans could ever invent a category (the four-door coupe), boast a de Dion rear suspension or crib styling from a Ferrari Daytona. Rover's postwar reputation for careful innovation starts here, with the P3 generation of 1948-'49. Not that you could ever tell by looking at it. 🐼



...it was among  
the most eclectic  
and modern of all  
running board cars.  
It's a lot of fun.







## Michael Horenkamp

Shot-Blast Booth Operator  
Chevrolet Motor Division

**IT WAS SUMMER 1965. I HAD JUST** completed my freshman year at Missouri University in Columbia and needed a job so I could return to school in the fall.

A neighbor who was a foreman at the St. Louis Chevrolet manufacturing plant helped me get a coveted summer job on the assembly line.

I was assigned to the shot-blast booth in the Corvette division. It was the hardest physical work I would ever do and the

toughest test of will I would ever endure outside of Army basic training.

The Fisher Body facility next to the GM plant would stamp out the fiberglass parts, then send them on a belt over to the Chevy side where they entered the shot-blast booth. The body parts were fastened together with bonding to create the full chassis, then literally baked in large ovens for four days. Then they went on to be fitted with engines, axles,

wheels, exterior refinishing, etc.

If those parts were to stick together after the car was built the bonding (a heavy, thick yellow-tan substance that no one called glue) had to hold. The stuff was applied around the edges of the individual parts. However, on the smooth fiberglass surfaces of the body parts it would not hold.

That's where those of us in the shot-blast booth came into the process. We manned large, long hoses that spewed ground metal filings a little larger than a grain of sand. We directed the spray against those areas where the bonding was applied, creating a roughened surface that would hold the bonding and keep the Corvette in one piece.

The spray of lead filings came out of the hose under 60 pounds of pressure and was very efficient at roughing the fiberglass surface. As you might imagine, that spray, if and when it hit human skin, could cause some serious pain and fairly impressive bleeding. I got sent to the infirmary twice when my protective gloves worked loose and I sprayed my wrists. The nurse even had a special paste to put on the wound that would draw out embedded filings.

To prevent such accidents, we wore heavy, calf-high rubber boots; tough, herring-bone weave denim coveralls; a thick, chest-high rubber apron; cotton work gloves under rubber gloves; a leather protector that covered arms and shoulders; and then, to top it all off, a hard plastic helmet covered in sheet rubber that extended halfway down the wearer's chest and back. A glass viewing aperture covered by a screen mask allowed us to see what we were doing. Each helmet had a connection that hooked up to an air hose without which the wearer could not breathe.

In the confined booth, as the parts went by we stood aiming our hoses marking the areas to be slathered with bonding. My first day on the job, I lost control of the hose, which began flailing around the booth sending shot all over. The man who was training me grabbed me by the shoulders and we huddled in a corner while other workers, further from the danger, flipped the switch to turn off the power. Then, without much fuss, we went back to work. Newcomers were supposed to learn the job in three days. It took me about two weeks.

There was no air conditioning in the plant and the work was a sweaty proposi-



tion. At the end of the day, my heavy-weight coveralls were so drenched and dripping, I might have just fallen into a swimming pool; that was after only four hours in the booth. We went in for an hour, then came out and worked at the roughing process with smaller tools on smaller parts, then back into the booth.

It was hard work, but the \$2.95-per-hour pay, for a young man looking forward to his 19th birthday, was little short of intoxicating.

My parents, my relatives, even some of the guys on the line warned me not to get swept up with the big money and decide to quit school. They need not have worried. Three months of honest labor and I was ready—make that eager—to return to the hallowed, ivy-covered halls of academia.

In any case, I returned to Missouri University, got my degree, spent three years as an enlisted administrative specialist in the U.S. Army, and then pursued a career in the newspaper industry. As for Chevrolet and the shot-blast booth, well, that's just a memory; the plant was moved in 1981 to Bowling Green, Kentucky. And I should add that the Corvette never really captured my imagination. Even as a young man I did not share the lust that drove so many others to own one. Perhaps that was because I had to work so hard on that production line.

As I think now, I puzzle a little at how quickly I put my Corvette experience behind me. But, in some ways, that part of my life was seminal: I learned what it meant to work, and work very hard, for a living; I met a rough, loud, often vulgar group of men who frequently mocked the values of morals and religious belief I had absorbed from my family; and I learned what it meant to be tired, extremely tired, at the end of a day.

Today, with more than 50 years of hindsight, I think the best lesson I might have taken from the experience is that I was lucky to have such a job at such a time. 🐞



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## Filler-Up, Kid

### IT'S 1942 AND I'M 14 YEARS OLD

working after school in a local gas station. Whenever a car drove in and pulled up to one of the three gas pumps (two "regular," one "super"), I briskly walked up to greet the driver as he manually rolled down his window. Mostly, he asked, "give me a buck's worth." Not many customers said, "filler-up!" in those days. (Later on, all sales were complicated by the requirement of gasoline stamps awarded according to the fuel needs of the driver. Physicians and Defense workers got more.)

Once I finished giving the gas, I asked the customer if he wanted me to check under the hood. A "sure thing," and a quick look at the oil level determined if a quart or more was needed. The 30-cent oil came in milk-like glass bottles that we poured from a large tank. The premium oil was canned and usually cost one dollar.

Batteries had three caps that I removed and, if necessary, added water. Some astute customers asked if it was distilled water as their owner's manual advised. We used tap water, but the boss had us saying "yes." Finally, we removed the radiator cap slowly, and with caution. More than once, a buddy of mine took it off too soon and came close to being scalded with a geyser of boiling liquid.

Now with the hood closed, I would

ask the driver to move the car to the air pump near the edge of the station's property. Using a handheld air gauge, I would fill all four tires, and the spare, if requested to do so. Finally, I took out my Windex glass spray bottle and the cleanest rag I had from my pockets, and cleaned the windshield. After taking the dollar for the gas, I wished the customer a good day. Very rarely, I received a nickel or a dime tip.

We had a loaded handgun in the back of the cash register, but, happily, I never had occasion to use it. However, we had other kinds of theft. Once, when the boss was alone at the station, a young man came in on foot and said his wife and kids were down the road in their car that had a flat tire. He wanted to borrow our tire jack (it was only one week old and my boss was very proud to own it). Finally, the young man was given the jack and he took off with my boss holding his wrist-

watch as collateral. End of story. The jack, worth over \$100, was never returned and my boss now had a \$2 watch.

I remember incidents like my "lucky day." A 1937 Ford V-8 entered the station going faster than most. The driver, very excited, said, "Quick, gimme a dollar's worth." While I was doing so, he kept waving the paper money at me yelling for me to hurry up. I hardly got the gas cap on when he thrust the bill into my hand and, with tires squealing, took off. Much to my



astonishment, when I was putting the bill into the cash register, I was shocked to see it was a \$10 bill. Certainly a \$9 "tip" was the most the station had ever received.

Over the years, my boss changed from Tydol gasoline to Gulf and then to ESSO. After receiving 50-cents-per-hour for years, the owner of the Amoco station across the street offered to pay me \$1.25 to jump ship. Amoco customers were insistent that they get the clear premium with the extra octane. They swore their cars couldn't ever be tainted with anything else. I once witnessed a fistfight when one of our guys put the cheaper colored regular gas in by mistake.

When I was attending a nearby college, I often did my homework between customers. All my textbooks had oil stains (no matter, I purchased old editions for as low as 25-cents). This studying paid off and after graduation I got a teaching job in the same town. I was often amused that the gentleman who spoke to me about his child at the school didn't recognize me as I greeted him at the gas station. The clothes made the difference! At school I had to wear a suit, tie, and white dress shirt, and at the gas station I had on an old jacket, multiple sweater layers with corduroy trousers.

Looking back, I cherish the memories I have of the small gas stations where I worked for 10 years. People couldn't reward me very often with cash, but their appreciative smiles and "Thanks, kid" did the trick for me. 🐶



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"As an engineer, I take a special interest in good engine performance," says J. Hirsch of Hirsch Auto. "The perfect restoration of this car is a labor of love. It's a car that's been around since the 1930s, and it's still going strong. It's a car that's been around since the 1930s, and it's still going strong. It's a car that's been around since the 1930s, and it's still going strong."



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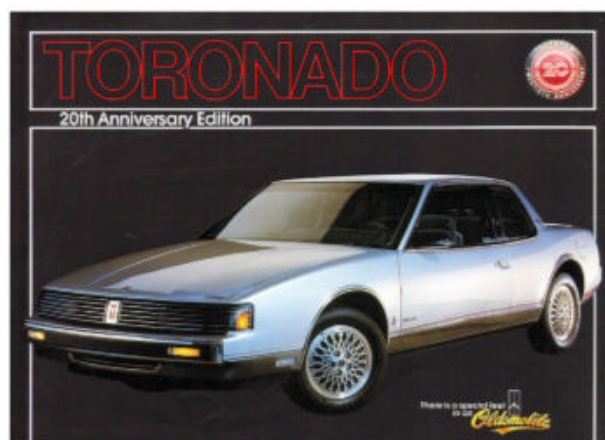
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Local transport .....	\$32.83

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Car covers .....	\$55-\$135
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Carpets .....	\$120
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Headliners .....	\$95
Nitrocellulose lacquer .....	\$35-\$43/gal



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## SALES RACE

(total model-year production)

1. Chevrolet .....	1,699,476
2. Ford .....	1,559,959
3. Oldsmobile .....	1,199,134
4. Pontiac .....	952,943
5. Buick .....	850,103
6. Dodge .....	453,522
7. Mercury .....	399,240
8. Chrysler .....	367,898
9. Plymouth .....	350,573
10. Cadillac .....	281,296

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AMC .....	\$6,710-\$12,179
Buick .....	\$7,844-\$21,577
Cadillac .....	\$13,128-\$26,759
Chevrolet .....	\$5,645-\$13,140
Chrysler .....	\$9,364-\$17,595
Corvette .....	\$27,027-\$32,032
Dodge .....	\$6,209-\$14,856
Ford .....	\$6,052-\$13,860
Lincoln .....	\$20,764-\$26,837
Mercury .....	\$6,182-\$14,377
Mustang .....	\$7,189-\$15,272
Oldsmobile .....	\$7,782-\$19,418
Plymouth .....	\$6,209-\$10,086
Pontiac .....	\$5,749-\$18,214



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**CHEVROLET IS BRINGING BACK THE CONVERTIBLE CORVETTE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1975,** and it will serve as the pace car for the Indianapolis 500. Computerized ABS is now standard, along with a 5.7-liter V-8 and 230 hp. The new convertibles have a factory price of \$32,032, with a production run of 7,315.





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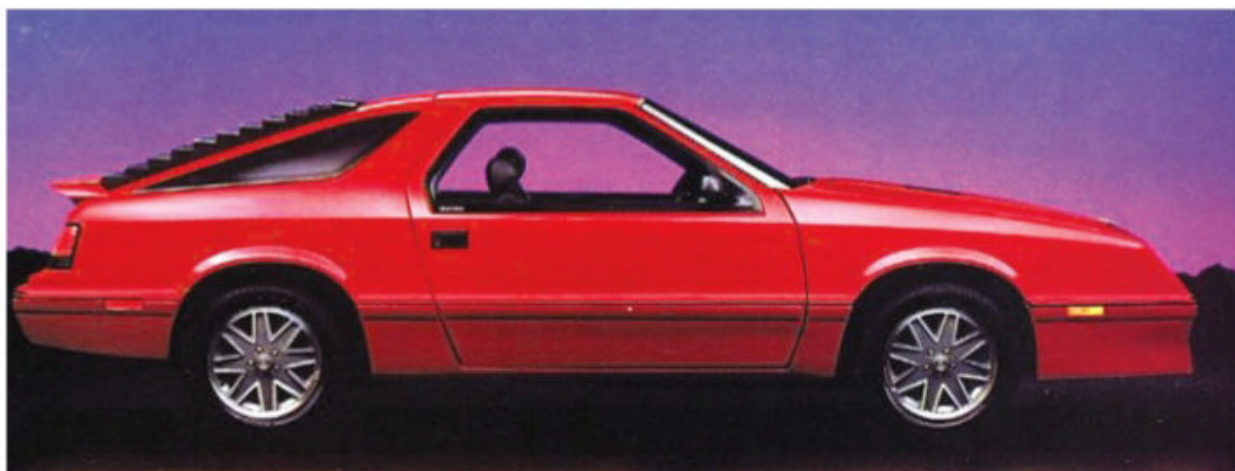
## CHAMPIONS

Daytona 500 .....Geoffrey Bodine  
(148.124 mph)  
Indy 500 ..... Bobby Rahal  
(170.722 mph)  
Formula One... Alain Prost (72 points)



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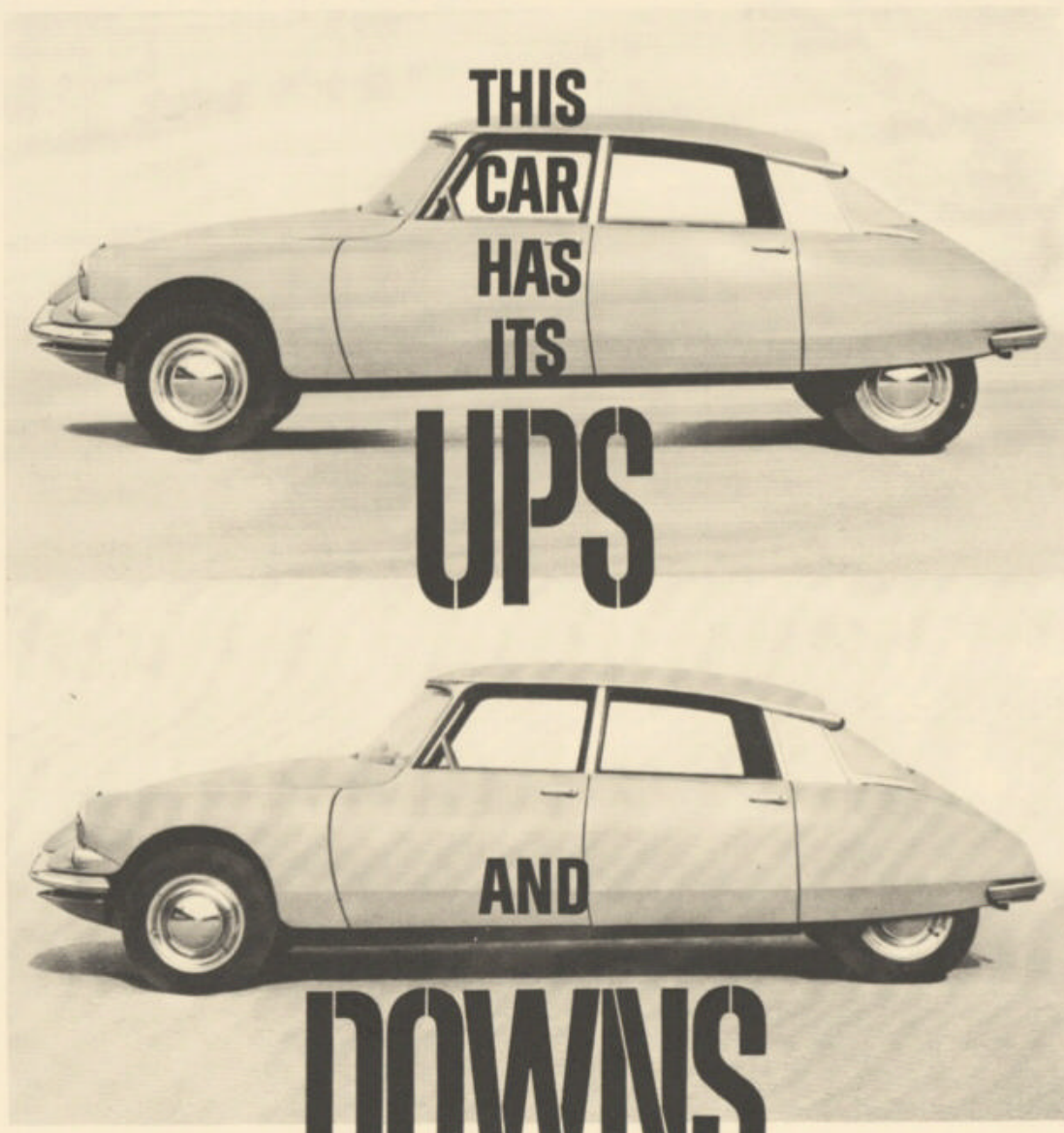
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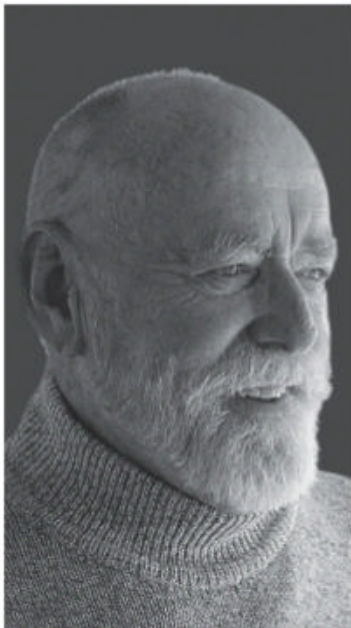
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Packard

designed its

cars to make

the other guy's

car absorb

the impact of

a collision.



## What Does *That* Do?

**A** while back, I was polishing my 1940 Packard 110 business coupe when Jacob, the little boy next door, wandered over. “What kind of car is that?” He asked. “Packard,” I replied. “Who made it?” “Packard. It was made a long time ago, before you were born,” I told him. Actually, it was made before I was born.

“It’s nice” Jake remarked. And then he went over and got his little pedal car, and picked up one of my rags and started wiping it down. “My Packard,” he said. After I had waxed my car’s exterior, I opened the door to wipe down the dash and do the windows.

Jacob ran over, jumped in, and slid over to the passenger’s side, so I couldn’t reach him, and started twiddling knobs. “Don’t touch that,” sprang from my lips.

Then he started pointing and asking: “What does that do?” “That’s a hand throttle,” I told him. “And this?” “It’s the gearshift lever.

It’s so we can go faster.” “Can it go *really* fast?” “Yes, if we want it to.” “Can we go for a ride?” “Maybe someday when you get bigger,” I said. Taking a kid around the block without a rear-seat car seat is probably a felony these days. Besides, this car has no back seat.

Jacob’s dad probably wouldn’t know what a hand throttle does either, or how a three-on-the-tree standard-shift transmission works for that matter. All his dad has to do is push a button and pull the shift lever to D in his Subaru. No clutching, no shifting, and no finesse required.

A modern car can tell you the gross domestic product of Finland if you know which screen to smear, but you would have to consult the 2-inch-thick owner’s manual to determine that. Today’s cars do most of the driving so you can sip your half-caf-decaf and fiddle with in-dash distractions in order to relieve the relentless boredom of inching along in endless traffic in a climate-controlled cocoon.

My old Packard is smooth, quiet, roomy, and simple. For entertainment, there is an AM radio. For air conditioning there are wind wings and a dash vent—though Packard did offer air conditioning in 1940, and was the first manufacturer to do so. Its seats are as comfy as my BarcaLounger, and I can wear my fedora like Humphrey Bogart, too. There are no cup holders,

but then you are so busy shifting and signaling you don’t miss them.

My 1940 Packard doesn’t have blinkers either. You used your arm to signal back then. I still do in my classics, though drivers today have no idea what I am trying to do. I never installed seat belts either. They weren’t compulsory until the ’60s in my state, and besides, this car has a frame under it that is heavier than those of most pickup trucks, and it is equipped with formidable no-nonsense steel bumpers, too. Packard designed its cars to make the other guy’s car

absorb the impact of a collision. Granted, I might go face-first through the windshield, but the car will be fine, and I’ll probably heal in time.

I restored this car accurately and painstakingly in order to make it exactly as it came from the factory. I did it so I could

have the experience of driving it in the condition its original owner would have enjoyed, when he drove it off the showroom floor. I am a history buff, and I like to live it whenever possible. I once paid a guy a handsome fee to take me up in his de Havilland Gypsy Moth biplane for the same reason.

I found out where Jacob was coming from when I first drove a Model T Ford. The dash was simple, but quite foreign to me. Like Jacob, I found myself asking “What does *this* do?” several times. That’s because there are things you have to do before you even crank start a Model T, and then when it comes to life, you adjust the spark and set the throttle on the steering column before the engine quits on you.

There were no seat belts in the T to worry about though. The strategy back then was to bail out if you lost control. It wasn’t too bad at the Model T’s 25-mph cruising speed, but in old films of Indy from the ’20s, you see guys doing it at 100-plus mph.

I’m like Jacob in my wife’s new Hyundai, too. While she is driving, I find myself messing with the plethora of Tic Tac size buttons for the ‘sound system,’ and swiping at the on-board computer screen and asking “What does *this* do?” where upon she smacks my hand and says “Don’t touch that,” and asks “Did you fasten your seat belt?” 🙄





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